THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • MONDAY • MARCH 11, 2024 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 16 • LATE CITY EDITION

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

RISE OF SAT-CHI CONTINUES: WORLD NO.1 DUO CLINCH PARIS OPEN

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty make short work of unseeded Chinese Taipei's Lee Jhe-Huei and Yang Po-Hsuan in straight games

RUBBER-STUMPING A DOMINATING WEEK

The Indian pair, one of the favourites to return from the French capital with a medal at the Olympics this Summer, didn't lose a single game all week. Across the five matches, they never allowed their opponents to settle. Their next event is the one at the All England beginning this week

ROAD TO TITLE

R1: bt Ong Yew Sin/ Teo Ee Yi 21-13, 24-22

R2: bt Man Wei Chong/ Kai Wun Tee 21-13, 21-12

QF: Supak Jomkoh/ Kittinupong Kedren 21-19, 21-13

SF: Kang Min Hyuk/ Seo Seung Jae 21-13, 21-16

2 The Indian pair has won the Paris Open for the second time

READ SHARE FOLLOW

newindianexpress.com

facebook.com/thenewindianxpress twitter.com/newindianxpress

instagram.com/newindianexpress

Modi Sarkar Ki Guarantee | Means Guarantee of Ease of Living

Pucca houses for over 4 crore families

Scan for more information

Hamara Sankalp Viksit Bharat

cbc 22201/13/0340/2324

State may ban cotton candy, regulate sale of manchurian, kabab

RISHITA KHANNA @ Bengaluru

AFTER Puducherry and Tamil Nadu, Karnataka may soon ban cotton candy and regulate the sale of popular street foods, like chicken kabab, gobi manchurian and others, that are said to contain Rhodamine B, a textile dye, which is a cancer-causing chemical.

Sources from the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said they collected food samples from across the state, including Bengaluru, and the test results "confirmed" the presence of Rhodamine B, a carcinogen that is added to give food items the bright hue. The laboratory results of the collected food samples have been received and keeping this as the foundation, Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao is on Monday likely to announce the ban on cotton candy and regulate the sale of other food items.

Earlier this year, cotton candy, a favourite among children, was labelled "very harmful" after tests conducted at a government laboratory in Tamil Nadu detected the presence of Rhodamine B. Following the test results, both the Puducherry and Tamil Nadu governments imposed a blanket ban on cotton candy.

Health experts said Rhodamine B, which is cheap, is commonly used to give vibrant colours not only to cotton candy, but also jellies and candies, and surprisingly, even chilli powder. "We collected cotton candy samples across the state. We also randomly collected the samples of food items that are believed to be infused with chemicals to give them a bright, attractive colour. These chemicals when consumed can cause various health problems, ranging from throat irritation to stomach pain, and have the potential to lead to birth defects and several types of cancers," an FSSAI source said.

TMC GOES SOLO, I.N.D.I.A OUT OF BENGAL

Mamata Banerjee announces candidates for all 42 LS seats: Cong says talks still possible

PRANAB MONDAL & PREETHA NAIR @ Kolkata / New Delhi

OFFICIALLY closing the door on the I.N.D.I.A bloc in West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress on Sunday announced candidates for all 42 Lok Sabha seats in the state, roping in both veterans and greenhorns.

Despite the snub, the Congress said there is still time to make the alliance work through negotiations. "Our doors are always open and an alliance can happen anytime before withdrawal," said Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge.

Among the newcomers in the TMC list are former cricketer Yusuf Pathan, who will contest from state Congress chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury's Baharampur constituency in Murshidabad district. Adhir, a vocal critic of TMC, was against the Congress having any truck with the Trinamool. Murshidabad has the highest Muslim population in Bengal at 67% and Chowdhury has been winning the Baharampur seat since 1999 though his victory margin has dropped over the years.

Reacting to Pathan's candidature, Chowdhury said: "If Mamata Banerjee wanted to show respect to the cricketer, she could have sent him to the Rajya Sabha. Bur she decided to field him in Baharampur to divide Muslim votes."

Notably, the TMC decided to field Mahua Moitra, who was suspended from Lok Sabha in connection with cash-for-question scandal, from Krishnagar.

"The allegation levelled against her was during the tenure of her previous term in Lok Sabha. If she gets elected fresh, the old allegations will not hold and there will be no bar for her to become an MP," said a senior TMC leader. Among the five sitting MPs axed from the list is Nusrat Jahan from Basirhat, where Sandeshkhali uproar surfaced.

The talks between the two parties hit a roadblock last month after TMC supremo and West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee refused to part with more than two seats for the Congress in the state. Though the Congress scaled down its demand from 10 seats to six, the TMC chose to contest solo in the state.

The TMC's main grouse was West Bengal Congress chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury's continuous attacks on Mamata and the party.

Hegde: 400-seat target to amend Constitution

SUBHASH CHANDRA NS @ Siddapur (Uttara Kannada)

UTTARA Kannada MP Anantkumar Hegde on Sunday triggered yet another controversy, saying BJP's slogan of "ab ki baar 400 paar" is aimed at ensuring two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha to allow the incoming government to amend the Constitution, which has been tampered with by the previous Congress governments.

At the BJP workers' meet at Halageri in Siddapur taluk of Uttara Kannada district, Hegde who is known for his infamous speech stating he will rewrite the Constitution in the past, said, "We have a majority in the Lok Sabha, while we have a simple majority in the Rajya Sabha. We need two-thirds majority in both Houses and in the states too to amend the Constitution."

He said, "Congress twisted and amended the original Constitution and inserted unwanted things in such a manner as to create a setback for Hindu society. CONTINUED ON: P5

EXPRESS READ

Man kills son for seeking money, fakes it as suicide, held

Bengaluru: The city police have arrested a man who allegedly killed his 21-year-old son and tried to pass it off as a suicide. Prakash's plot unravelled when the postmortem report revealed that the cause of death was strangulation. Later, Prakash told the police that he strangled Yogesh using his wife's veil and then hanged the body from a fan to make it appear like suicide. Prakash said he was fed up as Yogesh repeatedly demanded money from him to buy alcohol | P3

Swiss Federal Councillor Guy Parmelin presents a copy of an article published in this newspaper in 1947 to commerce minister Piyush Goyal on Sunday in New Delhi. The article pitches for enhancing trade between India and Switzerland | PTI

Did Modi stop Putin from nuking Ukraine?

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

THE Joe Biden administration had solid intelligence inputs that Russia was seriously considering to unleash nuclear weapons on Ukraine sometime in late 2022. So, the US administration sought to enlist India and China's help to prevent Russia using a tactical or battlefield nuclear weapon, says a new book *The Return of Great Powers* written by CNN's chief national security correspondent Jim Sciutto, quoting US officials. A chapter of the book is shared on the CNN website.

Sciutto reveals that senior US officials told him that outreach and public statements from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping helped avert a grave crisis. "I think the fact that we know China weighed in, India weighed in, others weighed in, may have had some effect on their thinking," Sciutto quotes a senior US administration official.

It may be recalled that Modi had said "Today's era must not be of war" and urged both Russia and Ukraine to resolve their differences through dialogue and diplomacy. Modi's statement "Today's era must not be of war'' was also used in the G20 Bali Leaders' Declaration in November 2022.

In 2022, Ukrainian forces had a clear lead on Russian-occupied Kherson, putting Russian units in danger of being surrounded, the book reveals. The view of the Biden administration was that Russia would not tolerate such a catastrophic loss and Putin would see it as a direct threat. In such an assessment, Russia could view a nuclear strike as a deterrent against further losses, says the book.

India, Euro bloc deal can fetch $100b FDI

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

INDIA on Sunday signed a trade pact with a four-nation European bloc that gives access to India's goods and services to their markets and opens up possibilities of $100 billion investments as FDI in the country spread over the next 15 years, according to a statement from the Ministry of Commerce and Industries.

The four nation bloc includes Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland. Dubbed European Free Trade Association (EFTA), the trade pact would not include foreign portfolio investments and it would take an year for it to come into force. This agreement can generate upto one million jobs in India.

EFTA will eliminate or reduce the import tariffs on 99.6% of India's exports. Similarly India will eliminate or reduce import tariffs on 95.3% of the exports from EFTA nations. The deal gives the four nations market access to non-agri products, concessions on processed agricultural products. However, agricultural products are out of the ambit of the pact and there is no change on duty on gold.

On IPR, both the sides agreed to follow Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights. P7,10

ASIAN QUALIFIERS

Error at trials for Oly medallists Bajrang, Ravi

FIROZ MIRZA @ Chennai

TOKYO bronze medallist Bajrang Punia had been in the forefront of a massive protest against former Wrestling Federation of India president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh last year. Missing most of the season last year, he failed to medal at the Asian Games despite getting a direct entry in 65kg. To add to his woes, on Sunday, he failed to secure a place in the India squad for the Asian Championships and Asian Olympic Games qualifiers to be held next month.

Joining him is another Tokyo silver medallist Ravi Dahiya, who had been nursing injuries for quite some time.

Bajrang Punia

Ravi Kumar Dahiya

The trials at SAI Centre in Sonepat were held jointly by the WFI and ad-hoc committee after United World Wrestling said it would accept entries only by WFI. The Asian championships and qualifier next month will be held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Gold medallists from six Olympic weight categories each in men's freestyle and Greco-Roman will represent the country at the qualifying event. The women's trials are scheduled at SAI Centre in Patiala on Monday.

Even as the loss was second consecutive selection trial loss for Ravi in the last nine months, it was Bajrang's defeat that garnered attention. He was given a direct entry for the Asian Games by the ad-hoc committee headed by Bhupinder Singh Bajwa last year. Call it poetic, aggrieved wrestler Sujeet Kalkal, who moved the Delhi HC against Bajrang's direct entry unsuccesfully, found a place in the squad. Bajrang, who had a tough first bout too, didn't compete in the bronze play-off.

India team for Asian qualifiers

57KG Aman Sherawat

65KG Sujeet Kalkal

74KG Jaideep

86KG Deepak Punia

97KG Deepak Nehra

125KG Sumit Malik

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU

ALMANAC TODAY
Monday: 11/03/2024 • Year: Shobhakruta • Ayana: Uttharayana
Ritu: Sishira • Masa: Phalguna • Paksha: Sukla • Tithi: Prathami 12.58 pm
Nakshatra: Uttharabhadra 1.58 am • Moon in Mesha Rashi • Rahukaala: 07:30 am to 09:00 am
Gulikakala: 01:30 pm to 03:00 pm • Yamaganda: 10:30 am to 12:00 pm

WEATHER
MIN 21°C | MAX 34°C
FORECAST
Mostly sunny.

Sunrise 06.39 am
Sunset 06.29 pm
Moonrise 07.09 am
Moonset 07.35 pm

BWSSB nod a must before drilling borewells

Start applying from March 15; Public borewells to get priority; Reduced water table reason for decision: BWSSB chief

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

ALL those who wish to drill borewells in the city should obtain the permission of the BWSSB. Action will be initiated against those who do not follow it, said the water board, in an order dated March 10.

Chairman of BWSSB Ramprasath Manohar said, "Due to shortage of rainfall, the groundwater table had depleted, and borewells in the city have dried up. Before sinking a borewell, according to the Karnataka Groundwater (Development and Management Regulations and Control) Act, 2011, permission has to be obtained from the necessary authorities. The water table has gone down because of the unmindful drilling of borewells without obtaining proper permissions."

People have to obtain permission from the water board before sinking borewells and this order is passed with the intention to prevent the exploitation of groundwater, Manohar said, and added that legal action will be initiated against the property owners who do not fall in line.

He also said that citizens will be allowed to apply to dig borewells from the water board's website from March 15. Permissions for public borewells will be given first priority, and private borewells will get a the nod after verifying the need, the water table in the area, and expert report, said Manohar and added that permission will be given only after spot visit.

BWSSB Chairman Ramprasath Manohar talks to Bengaluru residents to take note of the water situation in the city, on Sunday.

BWSSB chairman on Sunday, visited many areas in the city to take note of the water supply in the areas. He visited Agara Lake and discussed with the board officials on the feasibility of introducing filter tubewell on lines with the ones carried out by IISc at Devanahalli.

He checked the STP unit at Agara Lake and said that treated water will be supplied to industries and factories and potable water which used to be supplied to these units, will be diverted to areas facing water shortage.

He visited the Ground Level Reservoir at Narayanapura from where water is supplied to East Bengaluru areas including KR Puram, Vijnananagar, HAL and others, and also inspected the supply of water through the temporary tanks installed at prominent places in the area. He interacted with people of Krishanagar slum and asked them if they were getting enough water. He directed officials to increase the number of temporary tanks in the area.

Supply water at subsidised rates: Pvt schools to govt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE private schools in the city are facing the brunt of water scarcity in the city, rendering students and teachers helpless. The Associated Managements of Primary & Secondary Schools in Karnataka (KAMS), which has all private schools under its ambit, met with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM DK Shivakumar on Sunday and submitted a memorandum requesting the government to help address the issue of water scarcity in schools.

The association highlighted that schools cannot declare holidays since examinations are being conducted for different grades, and clean and hygienic toilets are a must for the students. "The BWSSB is only releasing water once a week, which is not sufficient in many schools. If the toilets meant for students are not kept clean, it will have a direct impact on their health. Private tankers are also not supplying water to schools, given that they have been taken under government's control. This has become a challenge for many educational institutions," read the letter.

The association urged the government to help private educational institutions, prioritise their needs and instruct the BWSSB to supply water to the schools at subsidised rates, and said that the students' health and future is at stake here.

Shashi Kumar D, general secretary, KAMS said that both the Chief Minister, and the Deputy Chief Minister have instructed BWSSB to cooperate with schools. "Educational institutes are mostly dependent on BWSSB water supply or groundwater through borewells, which have now gone completely dry. Schools are storing water in huge drums and tanks so that there is a reduction in wastage of water," he added.

Go easy on students during SSLC exams, NGO tells govt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

WITH the exam season on, the Karnataka School Education Assessment Board (KSEAB) has issued guidelines instructing that the seating arrangements should be in such a way for the SSLC students that they face the wall and write the exams so that they don't get distracted.

The Child Rights Trust (CRT) highlighting the above rule has written to the Minister of Primary and Literacy Education, Madhu Bangarappa stressing that this will create more fear against exams as there are already CCTV cameras and strict invigilation across centres.

The NGO has issued some guidelines and asked the department to consider them during the examination process to reduce fear, anxiety and panic among students. The letter mentions that "child-friendly exam practices" should be imbibed.

"How can one write exams facing the wall? Does the education department not have faith in our children? Or has the department come to a decision that it is not possible to prevent copying? This method increases anxiety instead of reducing it," read the letter addressed to Madhu.

CRT director, Nagasimha Rao, said that the best way to inculcate good exam practices can be to include exam lessons in moral science classes that will help students learn better. "The repercussions of cheating and copying can be highlighted in those chapters. Not all children copy... one out of ten children could do it. Is it possible to identify such children, understand their problems and mindset and offer counselling?" he wondered.

He added that children who copy are confused, and lack self-confidence, and such children need to be given psychological support.

CRT suggested that counsellors be marked in exam centres and help address such matters at the same time instead of releasing names to media and creating further negative impact.

Rao added that the department, before formulating these guidelines, did not consider students' viewpoints nor did they consult experts.

This year's SSLC exams will begin on March 25 and end on April 6, with over 8.9 lakh students set to appear.

SUGGESTIONS BY CHILD RIGHTS TRUST

- Allow students to visit the exam centre a day in advance to get familiar with the surroundings
- The teachers in centres should have a welcoming attitude
- Keep the toilets at the centres clean; make drinking water available in every classroom
- Make 'Child Protection Rules Mandatory' in the centres
- If any student cheats, suggest counselling without punishing him or her
- Make sure that children do not get the stigma that they have copied, and uphold the right of children to privacy
- Get feedback and acknowledge the suggestions given by children
- Appoint teachers who understand child rights and child education as invigilators
- Teach how to overcome exam anxiety and the effects of copying

₹270-cr new depot at Thanisandra to maintain VB sleeper coaches

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE Bengaluru Railway Division will build a Rs 270-crore new depot-cum-workshop near the Thanisandra railway station to maintain sleeper coaches of Vande Bharat, announced Additional Divisional Railway Manager, Bengaluru Railway Division, Parikshit Mohanpuria. These coaches were inspected by Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw at a Bharat Earth Movers Limited facility on Saturday.

Briefing newspersons at the DRM office on Sunday evening, Mohanpuria said, "The Railway Board has already given its approval for it. We are now conducting the survey for the workshop. We are expecting the coaches to come here for maintenance by the end of the year and want to keep the workshop ready by then." Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually lay the foundation stone for the development of trains here on March 12.

The PM will also flag off the Mysuru-MGR Chennai-Mysuru Vande Bharat Express (Train no. 20663/20664) and the Kalaburagi-SMVT Bengaluru-Kalaburagi Vande Bharat Express (Train no 22231/22232) along with eight other VB trains across India, he said. The goods shed at Penukonda redeveloped with improved infrastructure will be dedicated to the nation along with a Gati Shakti Multimodal Cargo Terminal at Oddarahalli Near Doddaballapur.

"The terminal will accelerate rail cargo traffic, generating direct and indirect employment opportunities," he added.

Two Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadhi Kendras (selling generic medicines at cheap prices) will be formally inaugurated by the PM at SMVT Bengaluru and Bangarpet railway stations.

Additionally, One Station One Product stalls will be commissioned at 40 railway stations in the Bengaluru dDivision. An official release listed these following stations among those where the stalls will be commissioned: KSR Bengaluru, Yesvantpur, Bengaluru Cantonment, Krishnarajapuram, Bangarpet, Kuppam, Hindupur, Satya Sai Prashanti Nilayam, Mandya and Tumakuru figure among them.

VOICE OF SOVEREIGNTY

Tibetan Youth Congress members pay tributes to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the sovereignty of Tibet on the 65th anniversary of Tibetan National Uprising Day, at Freedom Park on Sunday | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

Indira Canteen opens at KIA today

AKNISREE KARTHIK @ Bengaluru

FROM today, visitors to Kempegowda International Airport can have affordable food at the Indira Canteen in the airport premises. Thousands of cab drivers, labourers, middle class and upper middle class visit the airport day in and day out, and are forced to buy exorbitantly priced food at the airport to satiate their hunger. However, with the Indira Canteen being set up at the airport, now, food is made affordable for all. Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy initiated to set up an Indira Canteen at the airport, last year in July, after the cab drivers and private cab unions upraised the minister about their struggle to get pocket-friendly food at the airport. Reddy immediately responded to their demand, and and urged the BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Girinath to set up a canteen at the airport.

Officials who are close to the project said that initially there were discussions on who will handle the canteen, as the airport does not fall under the BBMP limits. Further, he added that it took so long to set up the canteen, as the airport had to identify and allocate land to set up the canteen at a prominent location which is easily accessible.

The canteen, with a kitchen, is set up at Rs 1.35 crore, and will serve breakfast, lunch and dinner. Prices of the food items on the menu will remain the same as the other Indira canteens. The official said the canteen will serve over 2,000 customers every day, and then take a call based on the response.

CM Siddaramaiah and Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy will inaugurate the canteen, set up near Parking 7, in front of Terminal 1.

Retd PWD official now chairperson of state eco body

Bengaluru: Union government has appointed Karnataka PWD's retired chief engineer **B Guruprasad** as chairperson of State Environment Impact Assessment Authority. Guruprasad served for the last three and half decades in Karnataka, till he retired as Chief Engineer. He also served as State government Secretary to PWD, and worked with the Metro and Airport authority. Taking all these into consideration, Union government has given him new task, based on the state government's recommendation. HM Lakshmikanth has been appointed as member to the Authority.

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

11TH March: We're now moving into a brief Aquarian phase. This is good luck for Aquarians, so we can all be envious of them. But all of us, no matter what our sign, can learn from some of this sign's lessons, chief of which is not to be taken in by first appearances. Everything comes with a range of wider possibilities, and Aquarians can usually tell us what it is!

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)
The first priority is to look ahead to the end of the week. You see, Venus is emerging from its relative seclusion into the full glare of public attention, encouraged by its relationship with optimistic, jovial Jupiter. When it does, your secrets will at last be made public.

TAURUS (Apr. 21 - May 21)
Mercury and the Sun are set firmly on a collision course, each with its own priorities, a sure sign that misunder-standings will be rife. Amusingly enough, you may be the unwitting source of misconceptions, mistakes and any rumours that are doing the rounds. What you've got to do is figure out just why arguments arise.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
No one can deny that you have kept your emotions in check, but to be so restrained may not be in your best interests. On the other hand, with Mercury, your personal ruler, still in such an awkward mood, there seems to be little you can realistically do to explain yourself at the moment. Hang on a little while longer.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
There is no need to dread Monday. The fact that the Moon begins the week in a helpful position, gets you off to a flying start. A sudden obstacle should not put you off - as long as you are prepared. Self-control and self-discipline, in other words, are the keys to success.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)
Not all is as it should be. Or is it? The fact is that, for as long as the Moon holds its current position, the facts are likely to be concealed by a veil of watery emotion and raw sensitivity. Actually, it's good to temper your self-centred goals with a dose of selfless compassion.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)
There is everything to be gained from indulging in sociable activities, especially if you are taking an organisational role. In fact, if you don't look after the practical details, other people may be left completely and utterly helpless! You see, someone is relying on you.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)
A magnificent relationship between the Sun and several other planets is excellent for all of you in the property market, just as long as you keep your cool. Domestic spending of all shades and hues is recommended, mainly because you seem to be able to pick out a good bargain.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
I know there have been times when you've had a rough ride. If there's one thing you are entitled to now, it's a fair hearing and, with the Sun so intriguingly aligned with Uranus, that's just what you can hope for. In fact, I'd say that the results could confound your expectations.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)
I am pleased to report that after months of decidedly wobbly financial indications your stars are now moving in a definitively prosperous direction. If last week's lunar patterns didn't demonstrate this much, this week's fascinating Solar relationships will.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)
Sometimes you can rely on partners to stand by you. Sometimes you can't. Both at home and at work rivals are changing tack and the opposition is beginning to crumble. However, today you will have to use all your wiles if you are to get everything that you want out of close colleagues.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
Battle-lines have been drawn, though not very clearly. In fact, the goal posts seem to be moving and I doubt very much whether either you or anyone else will be able to bring differences of opinion to a successful conclusion. You know, it may be okay to disagree.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar 20)
Social and creative possibilities are bright indeed, although I think you will be drawn to people who can offer you a sense of security. Older people may foot the bill, and friends from the past will be prepared to step in and help out. In the end you'll have an increasing sense that you are genuinely needed.

Solutions to Saturday's puzzle

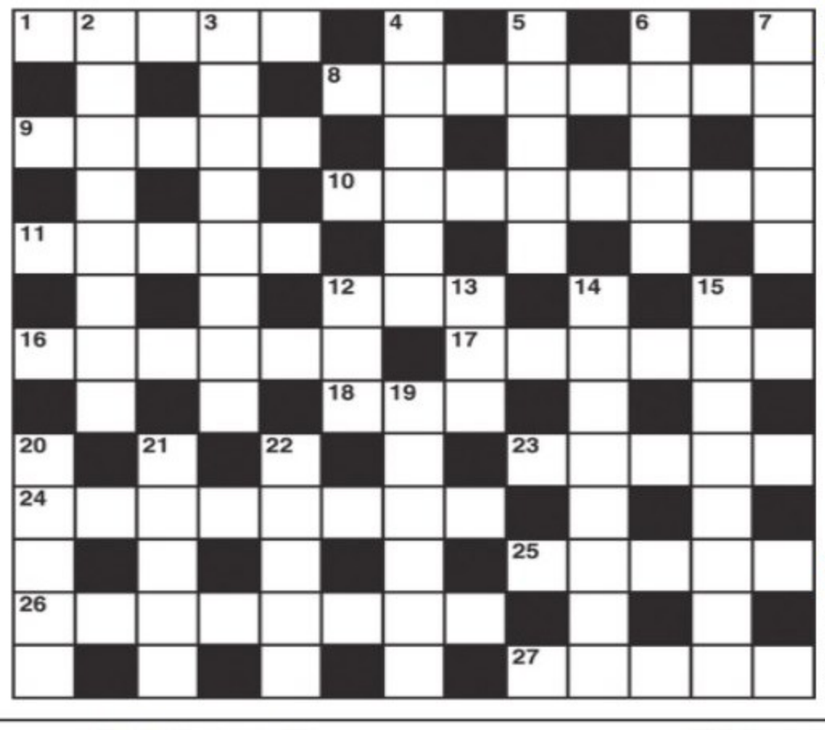
	2		5	3	8			1
	8				2			
7						2		
5		4		9				
2			8		6			9
				2		3		7
		8						4
			3				9	
6			1	5	4		2	

1	7	5	3	9	2	6	8	4
8	9	2	6	4	7	5	1	3
4	3	6	5	1	8	9	7	2
3	2	9	7	6	5	8	4	1
6	8	1	4	2	9	3	5	7
5	4	7	1	8	3	2	9	6
7	6	3	8	5	4	1	2	9
2	5	4	9	3	1	7	6	8
9	1	8	2	7	6	4	3	5

SUDOKU HARD

TEST YOUR NUMBER CRUNCHING SKILL WITH OUR UNIQUE PUZZLE

Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



CROSS WORD

ACROSS
1 Use one's loaf in dealing with ink stains (5)
8 Grounds for adjusting men's diet (8)
9 I am on time for the picture (5)
10 Highlighted what it is to be on edge (8)
11 What's possibly cut by the scythe (5)
12 Complete a fifty-fifty arrangement (3)
16 Road repairs in order (6)
17 Have prospects? (6)
18 The number that was offered initially (3)
23 Fish always left inside (5)
24 Everybody present and of sound mind (3,5)
25 Goes round and tells a yarn (5)
26 Not to be taken as shy (8)
27 Top scorer puts drive out of bounds (5)

DOWN
2 Household chores for children? (8)
3 A late drink to go to one's head? (8)
4 Fast, the Italian's pulse (6)
5 Reportedly quoted and seen to be lying (5)
6 Rejoice in unusual feats (5)
7 Learning duty's to be changed (5)
12 Social worker (3)
13 Stars in a couple of films (3)
14 Perfect order for dessert (5,3)
15 Filmed but didn't show (8)
19 The buck stops here (6)
20 Memorial put up for a little dog (5)
21 Sort of wound from a rifle shot (5)
22 Plot to acquire church paintings (5)

SATURDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Amateurish, 6 Bash, 10 Irons, 11 Went to sea, 12 Sidereal, 13 Inert, 15 Amasses, 17 Stumble, 19 Kneeled, 21 Seesaws, 22 Noses, 24 Colonist, 27 In the past, 28 Bonus, 29 King, 30 Improbable.

Down: 1 Avid, 2 Abominate, 3 Ensue, 4 Rawness, 5 Singles, 7 Aisle, 8 Heart's-ease, 9 Attitude, 14 Marking ink, 16 Salesmen, 18 Brass knob, 20 Declaim, 21 Saluter, 23 Sit on, 25 Nabob, 26 Isle.

JUMBLE

UNSCRAMBLE THESE JUMBLES, ONE LETTER TO EACH SQUARE, TO FORM FOUR ORDINARY WORDS.

BY DAVID L. HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK

GROOF
DYUGA
URATON
FBTUEF

Yeah, I thought you should know that Wilson is getting the promotion.
What? I've been here twice as long, and I trained him!
1/12
THE EMPLOYEE WHO DIDN'T GET A PROMOTION WAS TAKEN ABACK ---
Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

©2024 Tribune Content Agency, LLC All Rights Reserved.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Ans. here: ___ THE _____

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: CAMEO SWOON GLOBAL VISION
Answer: The size of the new vein of gold uncovered by using dynamite was — "MINE"-BLOWING

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU

03 BENGALURU | MONDAY 11.03.2024 | newindianexpress.com

The Udayagiri police in Mysuru have lodged an FIR against five persons, including former corporator Basheer Ahmed and Karnataka Minorities Development Corporation president Altaf Khan, in connection with the murder of former corporator Aiyaz Pandu's brother Mohammad Akmal. Akmal was murdered near Arya Bakery in Rajiv Nagar at around 8.30 pm on March 8. Akmal recently had a clash with Basheer and Altaf Khan over erecting flex boards

NIA COURT DECLINES TO DISCHARGE ACCUSED IN HARSHA MURDER CASE

Evidence indicates strong suspicion of Nadeem's involvement in crime: Court

YATHIRAJU @Bengaluru

THE NIA special court declined to discharge accused Syed Nadeem in the case involving the murder of Harsha alias Hindu Harsha in Shivamogga. Nadeem is accused No. 9 among the 10 accused booked for the murder of Harsha, a Bajrang Dal activist, on February 20, 2022.

Judge Gangadhara CM noted that the statements of witnesses and other materials collected during the investigation show Nadeem's involvement in the alleged crime.

"Nadeem harboured Reehan Shareef, Asifulla Khan alias Chiku and Syed Faroz alias Nihal, accused No. 1, 3 and 5, respectively, with an intention to screening them from legal punishment after the commission of murder of deceased Harsha, though he was very well aware that they have committed the murder of the deceased. Therefore, the prosecution has made out a prima facie case to frame charges against Nadeem," the court said.

It also said that the evidence collected by the investigating officer clearly indicates strong suspicion about Nadeem's involvement in the alleged crime. The prosecution too has made out a case for trial against him and that is the reason his application is rejected, it added.

Nadeem claimed that he was falsely implicated by the police. The prosecution, however, stated that the three accused took shelter with Nadeem's help to evade arrest after murdering Harsha. He allegedly took all the three accused to a dilapidated building at JP Nagar in Shivamogga city after the murder, gave them clothes to change from blood-soaked clothes and also food.

One granted bail

The special court granted bail to Tahir Husen alias RK Tahir, who is accused No. 15 among 17 accused booked for their alleged association with the banned Popular Front of India (PFI) in 2022.

The court noted that Tahir was arrested on February 9, 2024. He was remanded to police custody for a week for custodial interrogation. But the investigating officer has not collected any evidence in support of the allegations against him and there are no reasonable grounds for believing that the accusation made against him is prima facie true. There is no embargo under Section 43D(5) of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act to grant bail, the court said, granting bail with conditions.

It was alleged that Tahir was part of a conspiracy meeting held at different locations along with other accused associated with the banned PFI in 2022. It is also charged that he raised funds and recruited persons to strengthen the organisation to commit terror acts against Hindu leaders who raised their voice against persons belonging to Islam and to make India an Islamic country by 2047.

Police personnel and volunteers take part in a marathon on 'Drug-free Karnataka' in Bengaluru on Sunday. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara and others flagged off the run | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

10,000 run for a drug-free Karnataka

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

HOME Minister Dr G Parameshwara called upon the police to ensure a drug-free Karnataka. He was speaking at during a marathon (5 km and 10 km), organised as part of the police department's golden jubilee in collaboration with the State Bank of India on Sunday. The run, held on the theme 'Fitness for All', was flagged off by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah from Vidhana Soudha, and it traversed through Cubbon Park to spread awareness on drug-free Karnataka.

Parameshwara also called upon the police to contribute to the initiative for a 'Green Bengaluru'.

The CM emphasized the importance of harnessing the youth as the nation's greatest asset. He urged both the government and the public to collaborate on raising awareness to prevent drug addiction.

Siddaramaiah said, "The rising susceptibility of youth to substance abuse underscores the need for unified efforts to establish a drug-free environment in Karnataka and Bengaluru. A police run was arranged to raise awareness and restore Bengaluru as a green city to promote a healthy lifestyle for the youth."

Over 10,000 citizens, including members of the Karnataka state police, senior citizens, and specially-abled individuals participated in the event.

EXPRESS READ

Six held for murder bid on RTI activist

Bengaluru: Six people, including a notorious rowdy sheeter, have been arrested by the Kengeri police in connection with the murder attempt on RTI activist Nagaraj. The accused have been identified as Manish Mohan Pujari (28), Sasikumar Reddy V (20), Krishna (30), Venugopal A (51), Govindaraju KG, Satish (44). Krishna has a rowdy sheet at Chandra Layout police station. The police said on February 29, the gang attempted to kill Nagaraj near the Kengeri railway underpass. The conspiracy against Nagaraj allegedly involved Govindraju and bill collector Satish from Kumbalgodu gram panchayat, the police said. ENS

Debt-ridden farmer hangs self

Mandya: Unable to repay his loan, a 54-year-old farmer committed suicide in Maddur taluk in Mandya district on Sunday. Police said M G Ravishankar, a resident of Marasinganahalli village in the taluk, hanged himself in the morning. The farmer had two acres of agricultural land in which he had grown paddy and coconut. He had taken a loan of Rs 2.5 lakh from Niluvagilu Agriculture Cooperative Society, Rs 1 lakh from Besagarahalli Visveshvaraya Grameena Bank, Rs 3 lakh from IDFC Bank and Rs 1.5 lakh from private money lenders. But due to crop loss, Ravishankar could not repay the loan amount. ENS

Murder, not suicide: Man kills son, arrested

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

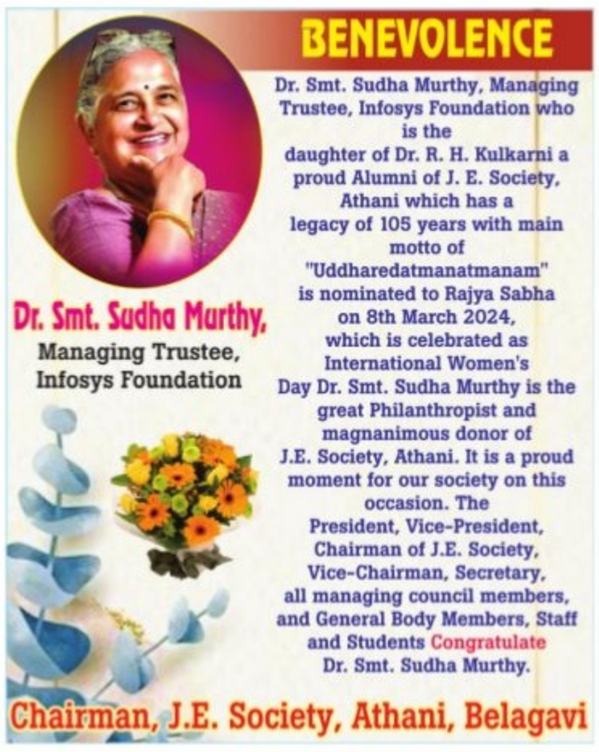
A man allegedly killed his 21-year-old son and tried to pass it off as a suicide, because the youngster would repeatedly ask him for money.

Police said they had filed a case of unnatural death, following a complaint received on Friday regarding the death of Yogesh, who allegedly hanged himself from a ceiling fan in his house in Basaveshwara Nagar police limits. Following a complaint by neighbours, the body was sent to a private hospital for postmortem, police said. On Saturday, the postmortem report disclosed that the cause of death was strangulation, prompting a murder investigation rather than a suicide case.

Police questioned Yogesh's father Prakash, a street food vendor in Basaveshwara Nagar, and his wife, a homemaker. During questioning, Prakash confessed that around 3pm on Friday, he had strangled Yogesh using his wife's veil, when she was away from home to buy vegetables. Prakash then hanged Yogesh's body from a fan with the same veil, to make it appear like suicide.

Prakash told police that he killed Yogesh because he repeatedly demanded money to buy alcohol for himself and his friends, and the two had frequent quarrels stemming from Yogesh's alcohol addiction. Yogesh, a final-year BBA student at a private university, would even steal money whenever he his demands were not met.

Basaveshwara Nagar police arrested Prakash.


BENEVOLENCE
Dr. Smt. Sudha Murthy,
Managing Trustee,
Infosys Foundation
Dr. Smt. Sudha Murthy, Managing Trustee, Infosys Foundation who is the daughter of Dr. R. H. Kulkarni a proud Alumni of J. E. Society, Athani which has a legacy of 105 years with main motto of "Uddharedatmanatmanam" is nominated to Rajya Sabha on 8th March 2024, which is celebrated as International Women's Day Dr. Smt. Sudha Murthy is the great Philanthropist and magnanimous donor of J.E. Society, Athani. It is a proud moment for our society on this occasion. The President, Vice-President, Chairman of J.E. Society, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, all managing council members, and General Body Members, Staff and Students Congratulate Dr. Smt. Sudha Murthy.
Chairman, J.E. Society, Athani, Belagavi

सत्यमेव जयते
Government of India
In time of difficulties anywhere in the world
You bring our children
safely to home
Operation Vande Bharat
2.17 lakh flights, helping 1.83 crore passengers during the Corona crisis
Operation Raahat (Yemen)
Safe return of 4,748 Indians
Operation Ganga
Safely brought home 18,282 Indians from the Russia-Ukraine conflict
Operation Kaveri
Safe return of 3,900 nationals from Sudan
India's rising glory in the world
Mera Bharat, Mera Parivar
cbc 22201/13/0344/2324

Karnataka on Sunday joined states like Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Kerala in installing artificial reefs to boost fish production. The artificial reefs in pyramid or round shapes were installed at Belake village near Bhatkal

People collect free drinking water from a tanker at Bangarappa Nagar in Bengaluru on Sunday | PTI

WHEN THE EARTH DRIES UP

It's drought season, with water growing increasingly scarce in both urban and rural areas. TNIE focuses on districts in South and Central Karnataka

TAPS RUN DRY, AND BOREWELLS DIE OUT

AKNISREE KARTHIK

BENGALURU is facing a severe water crisis, especially in the outskirts. The shortage is so stark that tenants are shifting to areas with better water facilities, unable to handle the anxiety of waiting for private tankers despite paying high prices, and the serpentine queue at Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike's (BBMP) RO plants.

While Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) and Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) officials have been holding marathon meetings and have taken steps like fixing rates for water tankers, setting up temporary tankers and drilling borewells, the crisis persists.

"In our area, water supplied by BWSSB is erratic. We are managing as we have a borewell. Water board linemen are diverting water meant for homes to bulk consumers like apartments, hotels and offices as they grease their hands," said Puttegowda, a resident of Hanumanthnagar. He said in some areas, BBMP RO plants are defunct, and they have to go to areas where they work, and wait for long hours to fill a 20-litre can.

"Our bore stopped yielding water as the water level has fallen, so we have to drill another one to about 1,800ft or deeper. We will have to spend around Rs 2 lakh and are also not sure how long the water will last, after spending so much," lamented Muniraju, a resident of Varthur. He said some people have changed homes to areas where they get a decent amount of water without having to spend too much.

He blamed officials for the lack of planning, failure to act on illegal constructions and for the sudden growth. He also blamed property owners who, out of greed to get more rent, have built houses beyond the permissible capacity, and put the available water under stress.

Indrani, a resident of RT Nagar, said, "The main problem is tanker suppliers. After the government fixed the price, 80 per cent are not ready to supply for this price, and are demanding more money. They fool people by saying they don't have borewells and need to ferry water from far away. For 6,000 litres, we used to pay Rs 700-1000, which has almost doubled now."

"Borewells in most houses/small apartments have dried up in this area. BWSSB releases Cauvery water for hardly 10-15 minutes. After MLA Akhanda Srinivas Murthy pressured the water board, we are getting water for at least 30 minutes," she said.

The situation is the worst on the outskirts like Whitefield, Varthur, Bellandur, KR Puram, Mahadevapura, Hoodi, Bommanahalli, Dasarahalli, Yelahanka, Uttarahalli, RR Nagar, Peenya, Byatarayanapura Yeshwanthpur, Herohalli, to list a few, which do not have piped Cauvery water connection yet.

People say it is high time officials and water experts take up large-scale conservation through rainwater harvesting in homes and public places, rejuvenation of lakes and wells, recharging of groundwater, promotion of treated water, mass-scale tree plantation across the city etc. Else the water crisis will be much worse in the coming years, they fear.

However, some Bengalureans said the water situation in their areas is not too bad and they are managing with the available Cauvery and borewell water.

Social worker Ramachandran N said he doesn't believe the rates fixed for private water tankers will be followed at all.

"The government has fixed rates for many things, like minimum fare for autos, cabs, commercial vehicles, tourist vehicles etc. These rates are just on paper, and the reality is different. Likewise, I don't think private water tankers will follow rates fixed by the government," Ramachandran said.

While BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Girinath maintained that the civic body is doing everything it can to alleviate water shortage, BWSSB Chairman Ramprasat Manohar confirmed that the city has enough water in the four Cauvery reservoirs to last till July, and people need not panic. He was confident that Cauvery Stage V will be commissioned by May this year, to pump water to 110 parched villages.

Underground water depletion harms farmers

PRAJNA GR

A drinking water crisis has gripped urban and rural areas in the river Cauvery's birth district of Kodagu. What's worse, even groundwater has depleted in several regions of the district, and farmers face additional losses as they are unable to find water even after spending lakhs on borewells.

Mahesh, a farmer from Torenuru village of Kushalnagar taluk, ventured into agriculture right after his studies in 1996. Ginger, yam, maize, tobacco, paddy – he practised rotational cultivation through the years. He was awarded the 'Yuva Raitha' honour by the state in 2012. He shared his experience through the years and explained that this year, the district is witness to one of the worst droughts as not just rivers and lakes, but even underground water has dried up.

The borewell that was dug in 1998 has dried up for the first time

"We are facing the worst heat wave this year in the district. The condition below the earth is worse, as there is too much heat underground too," analysed Mahesh. He said that water across rivers and lakes dried up in early February, forcing several farmers across Kushalnagar taluk to dig borewells to enable irrigation. "However, several borewells failed and farmers lost lakhs of rupees," he added.

He shared that four borewells going 600ft deep, were dug by farmers in Torenuru recently. "Three bores failed and only one had some water after digging for over 600ft. In 1996, water used to gush out just 25ft underground. But now, water cannot be retrieved even after digging for over 500ft underground," he said. Mahesh added that his father had dug a borewell in 1998. "But this borewell has completely dried up this year. In another farm, a farmer dug over 600ft underground and was able to obtain only half an inch of water," he explained.

Several borewells dug by the panchayat have also dried up. He said lakes in the region have been encroached and converted to farmlands and commercial sites, resulting in the depletion of groundwater.

"We are charged Rs 95 for digging every foot. In case the borewell is successful, we have to give Rs 400 per feet for casing work. Further, we have to spend on transport, welding and food for the workers. In the end, nearly Rs 2 lakh is spent on borewells, irrespective of its success rate. Several farmers, alongside suffering crop loss, have suffered immensely due to failed borewells," he concluded.

Where women trek miles for pots of water

K SHIVA KUMAR

IN the hilly terrain of Male Mahadeshwara, a bustling haven for hundreds of tourists drawn to the tranquillity of forest streams and wooded valleys, a harsh reality now casts its shadow over the dry forests and waterholes, forcing women in Palar village, on the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu border, to trek many miles to fetch a pot of water.

Palar, situated just a stone's throw from the backwaters of the Cauvery, is grappling with a water crisis of unprecedented proportions. The once-reliable pumpwell, a lifeline drilled to quench the thirst of men serving in the Special Task Force during their hunt for forest brigand Veerappan, now stands silent and dry, serving as a poignant emblem of the village's plight.

Despite its proximity to the mighty Cauvery river, water scarcity has gripped Palar and its neighbouring villages. These families, who once depended on the now-defunct pumpwell, find themselves in a desperate struggle for survival as their daily water requirements remain unfulfilled and they can get only 2-3 pots to meet their drinking water needs.

The plight of these villages reverberates across the region, with settlements like Kurrati Hosur, Shettahalli, Hoogyam, PG Palya and other remote hamlets atop Mala Mahadeshwara hills within Hanur taluk of Chamarajanagar district facing similar trials. The once-teeming streams have now dwindled, making people depend on tanker supply. Thanks to helpline services, they can expect water instead of taking pots on bikes to tubewells in fields in neighbouring villages.

While human inhabitants grapple with the harsh realities of water scarcity, the increasing density of wildlife in MM Hills is worrying environmentalists, as they rely on dwindling water sources for their sustenance. The drought has not spared tribal hadis in Biligiri Ranganatha hills as there is no drinking water in Puranni podu. With waterholes drying up, the 200 or more families depend on two hand pumps. Although work on water lines was completed a year ago, the tribals are yet to get piped water. Bommaiah, a tribal, said the community would be worst affected if the authorities don't take measures to supply Cauvery water. They want solar pumpsets to be fixed to fill up water bodies inside forests to save wildlife.

Beyond Chamarajanagar and Mysuru districts, villages in HD Kote and Saraguru taluks also face similar adversities. In Hadanuru village panchayat, including Alalahalli, water scarcity has become a hindrance to daily life, compounding the already dire situation. It has made many villages rethink about celebrating the local Mariyamma festival (Mari Habba) and inviting relatives and friends, as there is sufficient water supply due to erratic power supply and the depleting underground water table.

Worst summer ahead for Central Karnataka

G SUBHASH CHANDRA

THE failure of the Southwest monsoon and non-arrival of rain in the twin districts of Davanagere and Chitradurga, is leading to the worst ever summer ahead. Amid the depleting water level in the Bhadra dam, water problems are getting aggravated, plunging the state into the throes of a water crisis. With summer fast approaching, the government has decided to use water from its reservoirs for drinking and industrial purposes. Because of this, farmers who are already in distress due to the failure of the monsoon, may not get water for summer crops. As many as 126 villages in Davanagere district are facing drinking water problems, whereas in Chitradurga district, 248 villages are anticipated to face water problems.

Along with private borewells, tankers will also be requisitioned, if needed, to address the problems.

The water level of tanks in the control of Davanagere zilla panchayat are also in a severe crisis. Out of 212 lakes, 191 are totally dry and only 22 have 30 per cent water, which is also not fit for use.

Davanagere district incharge minister SS Mallikarjun, during the recently held KDP meeting, said that 22 villages get water supply from 27 private borewells which are rented for the purpose. He also directed officials to press tankers into service in the region which are highly fluoridated. The tankers are also fixed with GPS devices to ensure transparency in water supply and for removing flaws in distribution.

A majority of borewells, which are the major source of drinking water in Chitradurga and Davanagere districts, are drying up. According to officials from the disaster management wing, due to shortage of rainfall, farmers have overexploited the groundwater source by drilling borewells. "At many places, borewells have also run dry," they added. Chitradurga Zilla Panchayat CEO SJ Somashekhar told TNIE, "I have directed PDOs to ensure the problematic villages are identified and drinking water problems are addressed as and when it arises."

In case there is a lapse in addressing the problems, action will be initiated against the errant officials as drinking water is a necessecity and priority for us. The Chitradurga ZP has also set-up a helpline to address the problems, he explained.

The northern-most taluk of Molakalmuru, with 67 villages, tops the list with drinking water problems, followed by Hiriyur with 57 and Chitradurga taluk with 43 villages. Holalkere, with 13 problematic villages, stands last.

Davanagere ZP CEO Dr Suresh B Ittnal said they have identified drinking water problems in the district and are taking the help of private borewells to address these problems. In case the problem aggravates, we are also taking the services of tankers and are well-equipped.

In Davanagere taluk, 42 villages face a crisis, followeed by Channagiri where 30 villages facing a drinking water problem. However, only seven villages in Nyamathi and Honnali taluks face an issue, he explained. Both the CEOs confirmed to TNIE that the drinking water situation is well under control and we will not allow the problem to aggravate.

Fodder problems in Chitradurga

Livestock and cattle, too, are facing fodder problems in Chitradurga district, and the district-level task force has taken steps to start cattle shelters and water troughs to overcome the crisis.

Deputy director of Veterinary and Animal Husbandry department Dr Indira Bai said that Infosys Foundation is providing fodder to cattle. She said that 21,000 mini fodder kits have been distributed to farmers having water facilities, and green fodder is being raised which will solve the problem considerably. Fodder available in the district is sufficient to address the needs of cattle for the next three weeks. Some mid-summer rain will solve the problem in the district, she added. Seven cattle shelters have been started in the district and these will increase on the basis of needs of farmers.

Cauvery: BJP accuses Cong of 'adjustment politics' with TN

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru/Mysuru

Karnataka BJP leaders have accused the state Congress of indulging in "adjustment politics" with the Tamil Nadu government over the release of Cauvery water to reap dividends for their alliance in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

Leader of Opposition in Assembly R Ashoka said when Karnataka is facing severe drought and people are facing difficulty in getting water, the state Congress government is releasing thousands of cusecs of water from the Cauvery river to Tamil Nadu. "Bengaluru is facing a severe drinking water crisis. However, the government is continuously releasing water to Tamil Nadu. It is such a shame that they have come to an adjustment with the Tamil Nadu government as they are in an alliance in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls," he said

Speaking on the Mekedatu reservoir project, Ashoka said the Congress staged a protest to implement the project when they were in opposition. Now that they are in power, they have not allocated any grants in their budget, but are instead blaming the Union government. "If they are really concerned, they would have announced Rs 10,000 crore for the project. They are spoiling Bengaluru's reputation," he said. He also slammed the government for not paying compensation to farmers who are in distress.

Refuting all these allegations, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar clarified that water was released from KRS dam to the Shiva dam and was meant for Bengaluru city. "The BJP is trying to misled people by making baseless charges. There is not enough water to meet the drinking water needs of Bengaluru. When we are not able to provide water for farmers and for drinking water, why will we give water to Tamil Nadu?" he said.

BJP leaders and JDS supremo HD Deve Gowda should first prevail upon the Centre and get permission for the Mekedatu project, he said adding that the saffron party is now making baseless charges to cover up their mistake.

Meanwhile, Kannada activists and Cauvery action committee members took out protests wearing black bands against the release of Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu.

They blamed the Congress government for the acute water scarcity and drying up of water bodies. They alleged that the government is misleading the farming community.

Farmers in Srirangapatna blocked the highway carrying empty pots and others got into the river against the release of water to Tamil Nadu. They want the government to stop discharge into rivers and divert it to irrigation canals to save standing crops.

Water meant for Bengaluru, not TN, says Cauvery Nigam

The Cauvery Neeravari Nigam Limited (CNNL) has issued a clarification that water is being released to address the drinking water problems in Bengaluru and not to Tamil Nadu. CNNL officials said 1,000 cusecs of water is required for drinking and industrial purposes daily in Mysuru and Bengaluru. For Bengaluru, 600 cusecs of water from Shiva dam in Malavalli is being released from Thorekadanahalli reservoir. But the water level at Shiva reservoir has reduced to just 36 inches from March 6 to 8. Based on a request from BWSSB officials on March 9, around 4,780 cusecs of water was released from KRS dam at 7 pm on March 9. As 2,000 cusecs of water is also being released from Kabini dam, the water level at the Shiva reservoir increased by 16 inches. On March 10, 2,769 cusecs of water was released to Shiva reservoir. As there was an increase of 18 inches at Shiva reservoir, the release from KRS dam was reduced to 1,008 cusecs by noon. **ENS**

PM Modi on his fourth visit to Kerala this year, will be campaigning in Palakkad for BJP candidate C Krishnakumar, the party's state general secretary and a former deputy mayor of the city corporation. While he is slated to hold a road show there, the BJP state leadership is also trying to campaign in Pathanamthitta for party candidate Anil Antony

Jagan calls party cadres to get 'Siddham' for historic victory

Likens polls to battle, asks people to defeat forces obstructing growth

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Medarametla (Bapatla)

CHIEF Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy described the tripartite alliance of TDP, JSP, and BJP as a front to fight for the feudalists against himself, who represents the poor and downtrodden.

Addressing the gathering at Medaramettla of Addanki assembly constituency in Bapatla district on Sunday as part of his final 'Siddham' meeting, Jagan reminded people that in 2014, this very alliance had made tall promises but kept none. 'Yet again it is coming to you with Naidu leading from the front to cheat you once again," he asserted. Stating that the election notification is likely to be issued in another four days, Jagan called upon party cadres and supporters to get Siddham (ready) for poll battle and securing another historic victory. Likening the ensuing elections as battle of Kurukshetra, he said the people are Krishna and he is Arjuna. "It is time to take out your potent Astra -- vote and use it defeat the forces obstructing the development of poor and downtrodden," he said Elaborating on the tripartite alliance of TDP, JSP, and BJP, Jagan said the parties in the tripartite alliance only have commanders but no soldiers, hence the need for the pacts and ploys. "I do not need political stars as star campaigners when the people themselves are my star campaigners. In this war between credibility and deceit, I fight for people's victory alone, while they fight to defeat me," he said.

CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy during the Siddam meeting on Sunday

MUDRAGADA TO JOIN YSRC

Kakinada: Putting an end to the suspense, Kapu patriarch and former minister Mudragada Padmanabham has decided to join the YSRC. He will join the ruling party in the presence of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on March 14. There has been speculations about the former minister joining either the Pawan Kalyan led Jana Sena Party or the YSRC for sometime. Both the parties have sent feelers to the leader on earlier occasion. Initially, Mudragada weighed towards the JSP. YSRC recently renewed its attempts to woo Mudragada and managed to succeed.

Mocking Naidu allying with parties that have no vote base in the state, Jagan said the alliance consists of parties that have bifurcated AP in an unjust manner and parties that got fewer votes than NOTA.

Ridiculing super six schemes of Naidu, he recalled that when the government has been implementing various welfare schemes, TDP chief said the state turning into another Sri Lanka that is facing economic crisis.

"In 2019, I promised that the good days are coming and I've fulfilled that promise. Now I promise that good days will continue even after 2024," he said while asking his party men to visit every household and tell people to re-elect Jagan as Chief Minister for continuity of all the welfare schemes. "If Naidu is voted to power, these schemes, volunteer systems will all vanish," he said while reiterating the target of 175 assembly and 25 Lok Sabha seats in 2024.

Defeat 'unholy' BJP-JDS alliance: Siddu, DKS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Mysuru

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday blew the poll bugle for the Lok Sabha election, appealing to the people of Mandya to defeat the unholy alliance of BJP-JDS.

The government-sponsored Guarantee Samavesha, held in Mandya, turned into a political convention with speakers attacking BJP and JDS in Vokkaliga heartland.

Siddaramaiah said JDS leaders, who claimed to be secular all these days, are seen wearing saffron attire. People of Mandya, who are known to take an independent stand, should show BJP-JDS the door, he added. He said JDS patriarch HD Deve Gowda, who once wished to be reborn as a Muslim, has joined hands with Prime Minister Narendra Modi now. The CM claimed that no one from the alliance will win.

Claiming that former actress Sumalatha Ambareesh won the Mandya Lok Sabha election from Congress votes and not BJP's, he said talks are on whether to field Sumalatha again from Mandya, as an alternative candidate is yet to be decided. "Let them field anyone, you people should support the Congress candidate," he said.

"People of Mandya are known to give surprising verdicts, setting their own tone. This time, I am confident that you will elect Congress candidate Venakataramene Gowda (Star Chandru)," he said.

Thanking people of Mandya for electing six from Congress and KRRS in the Assembly election. He said Karnataka voters are mature and will never be carried away by BJP's false promises. JDS leaders, who claimed to be sons of the soil, have developed a strong love for BJP, even as the government is seriously involved in managing drought, he added. He said the government has commissioned Mysugar factory paying Rs 50 crore and is committed to building a new sugar factory. Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar said that every single family in the state has benefited from the guarantees, implemented at a cost of Rs 6,000 crore, giving a boost to the state's economy. He said Rs 2,000 crore has been released for the development of irrigation canals and filling up of tanks. He added that the government is committed to implementing the Mekedatu project.

Gowda cosying up to BJP shows his double standards, says CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

AS the countdown for the Lok Sabha polls begins, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday trained his guns at his bete noire, JDS supreme and former prime minister H D Deve Gowda, accusing the latter of "double standards" for cosying up to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "Deve Gowda is heaping praises on Modi now as he has formed an inseparable relationship with the PM. I wonder why Gowda became like this. The same Gowda had said that if Modi becomes the PM again (during 2019 LS polls), he will leave the country. This is double standards. I did not expect the former PM of this country to say this," he said.

At a felicitation programme for newly elected Bengaluru Teachers' constituency MLC Puttanna in Kengeri here, Siddaramaiah said if the BJP assumes that its candidates can win in the name of Modi, then it is nothing but stupidity. The saffron party, he said, had failed to win the constituencies where Modi had campaigned during the 2023 assembly polls.

He also recalled that Gowda had once said that he wants to be "born as a Muslim in his next life." "Gowda had said that he will always be against the BJP. Now, he has aligned with the party for the survival of JDS, but people of the state are intelligent enough to know that Gowda takes decisions politically for the survival of his family." He expressed confidence that MP DK Suresh will win from the Bengaluru Rural seat again.

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar insisted that the BJP and JDS MPs should get drought relief from the Centre. "They have not raised their voices for the state. We have a water crisis in Bengaluru, but BJP MPs are not prevailing upon the Centre to approve the Mekedatu project. They have not done anything on our demand to increase the number of man days under MGNREGA from 100 to 150. Instead, they are trying to stifle DK Suresh, who tried to raise his voice in favour of the state," he said. "If they have any shame, let them get drought relief from the Centre. And also increase the number of man days under MGNREGA from 100 to 150." Shivakumar also appealed to the teacher fraternity to support the Congress in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. "The CM and I appeal to you to support our candidates in Bengaluru North, South, Central and Rural Lok Sabha constituencies, like you did in the recent MLC elections," he said and promised to fulfil the teachers' demands.

K'taka Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre with his Kerala counterpart AK Saseendran at Bandipur on Sunday

3 states to curb man-animal conflict

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Mysuru

KARNATAKA Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre has said that the governments of Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu will work together to avoid human-animal conflict, prevent poaching, and protect the flora and fauna.

Speaking during an inter-state coordination committee meeting attended by Kerala Forest Minister AK Saseendran and senior forest officials from the three states at the safari centre in Bandipur Tiger Reserve on Sunday, Khandre said that wild animals have no boundaries and cross state borders in search of food and water.

"As elephant herds travel long distances in search of food and water, elephant corridors have been created which pass through states. Even tigers move from one state to another. Wild animals have no boundary," Khandre said. Stating that discussions are held on protecting and conserving flora and fauna and measures to prevent wildfires, Khandre said that a detailed project report will be prepared to take up programmes.

IN ONE VOICE

To jointly identify wildlife habitat, its protection

To jointly work to prevent human-animal conflicts

To exchange information, ideas on implementing development programmes

To take up joint operations in conducting wildlife census, other activities

To create an advisory board involving wildlife experts from the 3 states

"After the implementation of the Wildlife Protection Act, there has been an increase in the wildlife population. However, the increase in wildlife population has led to human-animal conflict. Wild animals are straying into forest fringe villages. So, there is a need for coexistence between humans and wild animals to prevent conflict and poaching activities," he elaborated.

Highlighting the various programmes initiated by the Karnataka government to avoid human-animal conflict, Khandre said that the department has created elephant proof trench (EPT), installed rail barricades, and erected solar fences at the forest borders.

"There is a need for joint operation from three states to prevent human-animal conflict. The forest departments must follow the standard operating procedure and take the support of other departments in the activities. Apart from initiating programmes to prevent human-animal conflicts, the three states should cooperate in using advanced technologies in removing lantana, prevent wildfires and stop poaching," he said.

If we get 2/3 majority, there will be a significant change in country: Hegde

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"WE tried to bring in certain laws like CAA, but it was not possible because of lack of required majority. If we get two-thirds majority everywhere, there will be a significant change in the country," Ananthkumar Hegde said.

Pointing out that there was 68 per cent voting last time, of which 85 per cent Hindus voted for him, he said, "There are some 'soda bottles' -- around 10 per cent -- but we should not bother about them. My sole aim is that Congress -- the party of betrayers -- should go. The so-called seculars have not decided, only Hindus have decided," he said. After Hegde's statement faced intense criticism across board, BJP Karnataka in its official handle stated, "MP Shri Ananthkumar Hegde's remarks on the Constitution are his personal views and do not reflect the party's stance. BJP India reaffirms our unwavering commitment to uphold the nation's Constitution and will ask for an explanation from Shri Hegde regarding his comments."

'Should be disqualified'

Chief minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday said Hegde should be disqualified from contesting elections for making such statements.

"Without the support of party leaders, a parliamentarian like Ananthkumar Hegde cannot make such bold, anti-constitutional statements. Hegde, who has taken an oath on acting in accordance with the Constitution, is making a statement against the same Constitution which is definitely a punishable offence. The Lok Sabha Speaker should take note and take strict action against Hegde. He should be permanently disqualified from contesting elections," he said. If the PM does not agree with Hegde's opinion, let him be dismissed, he suggested. "It seems BJP plans implement the Manu Smriti which existed before the Constitution," he stated.

DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act.) read with Rule 3(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (the said Rules). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the said Rules, the Authorised Officer of IIFL Home Finance Ltd. (IIFL HFL) (Formerly known as India Infoline Housing Finance Ltd.) has issued Demand Notices under section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the Borrower(s), to repay the amount mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them. In connection with above, notice is hereby given, once again, to the Borrower(s) to pay within 60 days from the publication of this notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest from the date(s) of Demand Notice till the date of payment. The detail of the Borrower(s), amount due as on date of Demand Notice and security offered towards repayment of loan amount are as under:

Name of the Borrower (s) / Guarantor (s)	Demand Notice Date & Amount	Description of secured asset (immovable property)
Mr. Jayakumar J K Fashion Mrs. Prathima M **(Prospect No 970943)**	**06/03/2024 Rs.48,59,089/-** (Rupees Forty Eight Lakh Fifty Nine Thousand and Eighty Nine Only)	All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Being: Site No.07, Old Katha No.6004/225/2a, New Katha No.869 Formed In Sy.No.225/2a, Situated At Kengeri, Kengeri Hobili, Bangalore South Tq, Bangalore, Karnataka, 560060. Area Admeasuring (In Sq. Ft.): Property Type: Land_Area, Built_Up_Area, Carpet_Area Property Area: 1225.00, 2144.00, 1715.00. Bounded By: North: Site No.6, South: Road, East: Site No.8, West: Road.

If the said Borrowers fail to make payment to IIFL HFL as aforesaid, IIFL HFL may proceed against the above secured assets under Section 13(4) of the said Act, and the applicable Rules, entirely at the risks, costs and consequences of the Borrowers. For, further details please contact to **Authorised Officer** at "ADAM CHAMBERS," #11, Richmond Road, Bengaluru - 560025 **Or Corporate Office: IIFL Tower,** Plot No. 98, Udyog Vihar, Ph-IV Gurgaon, Haryana.

Place: Bangalore, Date: 11-03-2024 **Sd/- Authorised Officer, For IIFL Home Finance Ltd.**

KARNATAKA GOVERNMENT STOCK (SECURITIES)
Finance Department
Vidhana Soudha, Bengaluru.

1. Aggregate Amount: **Total Rs.6000 Crore, ((Rs.1000 Crore-10 Year Tenure) (Rs.3000 Crore-13 Year Tenure) and (Rs.2000 Crore -14 Year Tenure))**
2. Method of Issue : By auction, through PDO, RBI, Mumbai (Fort).
3. Date of Auction : **March 12, 2024.**

Government of Karnataka invites subscription to the above securities. Copies of the Notification and Application forms may be obtained from PDO, RBI, Bengaluru. Non-competitive bidding facility has been introduced by RBI to encourage participation of retail investors. The Government stock up to 10% of the notified amount of the sale will be allotted to eligible individuals and institutions. Sample Tender Forms and the revised scheme of Non-competitive bidding facility is available on the website **www.rbi.org.in**

Sd/- (Dr. P. C. Jaffer)
Secretary to Government
DIPR/CP/RO/4108/2023-24 **(Budget & Resources), Finance Department**

FORM NO.14 [See Regulation 33 (2)]
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-1-BENGALURU
BSNL Building , 4th Floor, Telephone House, Rajbhavan Road, Bangalore-560001

DRC NO: 238/2020

Syndicate Bank, Vimanapura Branch, Jesu Kripa Complex, Vimanapura Old Airport Road, Bengaluru-560 017. ...Certificate Holder

Versus

M/s. Divas & Another ...Certificate Debtor(s)

DEMAND NOTICE

To
1. M/s. Divas, Represented by its Proprietor Sri. Pradeep Kumar Samal, S/o. Sri. Durga Charan Samal, No.24/64, Below Born Baby Store, Next to Kalamandir, Marathahalli Outer Ring Road, Bengaluru-560 037.
2. Sri. V.S.Rajashekar, S/o. Sri. Veeranna Gowda, No.92, 1st Lane, Hanumareddy Layout, Chinnappanahalli, Marathahalli, Bengaluru-560 037.

In view of the Recovery Certificate issued in **OA No.79/2019** passed by the Hon'ble Presiding Officer, DRT, Bengaluru **on 12/05/2020** for an amount of **Rs. 12,80,727/- (Rupees Twelve Lakhs Eighty Thousand Seven Hundred Twenty Seven Only)** is due against you along with interest and costs from date of filing of O.A.s till realization. You are hereby called upon to deposit the above sum within 15 days of the receipt of the notice, failing which the recovery shall be made as per rules.
In additions to the sum aforesaid you will be liable to pay:
a) Such interest as is payable for the period commencing immediately after this notice of the execution proceedings.
b) All costs, charges and expenses incurred in respect of the service of this notice and other process that may be taken for recovering the amount due.
Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on this **27th day of July 2020.**

Sd/- RECOVERY OFFICER-II,
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I, BENGALURU ,

Note: Attention is invited to Rule 16 of the Second Schedule of the Income Tax Act 1961 read with recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 which is reproduced below: **"Rule 16(1)** where a notice has been served on a defaulter under Rule 2, the defaulter or his representative or his representative in interest shall not be competent to mortgage, charge, lease or otherwise deal with any property belonging to him except with the permission of the Debts Recovery Officer, nor shall any civil court issue any process against such property in execution of a decree for the payment of money. 2) Where an attachment has been made under this schedule any private transfer or delivery of the property attached or of any interest therein and any payment to the defaulter of any debt, dividend or other monies contrary to such attachment, shall be void, as against all claims enforceable under the attachment".

IDBI BANK
(CIN)L65190MH2004GOI148838
website: www.idbibank.in

IDBI LEARNING CENTRE
J P Nagar, Bengaluru - 560078

REQUIREMENT OF OFFICE PREMISES @ JP NAGAR

Bank desires to acquire premises on lease at **J P Nagar, Bengaluru City of Karnataka State** having carpet area of around **3000 to 3200 sq. ft.**, should preferably be on Ground Floor and located strategically on the main road having good frontage visibility, adequate power supply and parking facility. Interested parties owning suitable premises may apply to **Deputy General Manager ILC, Bengaluru** on below mentioned address **within 10 days i.e. 6.00 pm on or before 21st day of March 2024**. Estate agents must furnish complete details along with authorization letters from landlords, noting that the bank will not offer any brokerage. IDBI Bank reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers without specifying reasons. Applicants are advised to follow the "Instructions/Guidelines for submitting the offer," available on our website www.idbibank.in under Notices-Tenders or obtainable from any of our branches

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 11.03.2024

Sd/-
Shri Anil Panicker
Deputy General Manager
IDBI BANK LTD.,
IDBI LEARNING CENTRE
No.20/1,24th Main, 6th Phase
J P Nagar, Bengaluru-560078

DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act.) read with Rule 3(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (the said Rules). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of the said Rules, the Authorised Officer of IIFL Home Finance Ltd. (IIFL HFL) (Formerly known as India Infoline Housing Finance Ltd.) has issued Demand Notices under section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the Borrower(s), to repay the amount mentioned in the respective Demand Notice(s) issued to them. In connection with above, notice is hereby given, once again, to the Borrower(s) to pay within 60 days from the publication of this notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest from the date(s) of Demand Notice till the date of payment. The detail of the Borrower(s), amount due as on date of Demand Notice and security offered towards repayment of loan amount are as under:

Name of the Borrower (s) / Guarantor (s)	Demand Notice Date & Amount	Description of secured asset (immovable property)
Mr.Narasimhan A Miss.Divya Bharathi N **(Prospect No 943946 & 955869)**	**06-Mar-2024 & 943946 is Rs. 22,38,362/-** (Rupees Twenty Two Lakh Thirty Eight Thousand Three Hundred Sixty Two Only) **& 955869 is Rs.25,15,147/-** (Rupees Twenty Five Lakh Fifteen Thousand One Hundred Forty Seven Only)	All that piece and parcel of the property being **Property No.1:** Flat No.A-802, 8th Floor, BlockA, Super Built Up Area Ad.Measuring: 1300 Sq.ft, Sumo Sonnet, Survey No.48/7, Khatha No.398/245/2/48/7, Situated at Kudlu Village, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Urban District, Karnataka, India, 560068. Bounded by: North: Elevator, South: B Block, East: Swimming Pool, West: Flat No.804., **Property No.2:** Flat No A 803, 8th Floor, Block A, Super Built Up Area Ad.Measuring: 1305 Sq.ft, Sumo Sonnet Apartments, Kudlu Main Road, Near Aecs Layout Kudlu Village, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore Urban District, Karnataka, India, 560068. Bounded by: North: Land Sy No. 48/7, South: Elevator, East: Swimming Pool, West: Flat No. A 801.
Mr.Saleem Pasha,Mr.Rabbani Pasha, Mrs. Thaslim, KGN Silk **(Prospect No IL10309912)**	**06/03/2024 Rs.11,58,372/-** (Rupees Eleven Lakh Fifty Eight Thousand Three Hundred and Seventy Two Only)	All that piece and parcel of the property being: Municipal Khaneshuman Khatha no 660/366/24/2, Ward no 22/5, Situated at Ramnagara town, Ramnagara district, Karnataka, India, 562159. Area Admeasuring (In Sq. Ft.): Property Type: Land_Area, Carpet_Area, Built_Up_Area Property Area: 1800.00, 290.00, 342.00. Bounded By: North: Shaukath Pasha GPA Site, South: Conservency, East: 16 Feet Road, West: Site No 29.
Mrs. Jayamma Mr. Venkataiah Milk And Agreculture **(Prospect No IL10558100)**	**06/03/2024 Rs.4,99,165/-** (Rupees Four Lakh Ninety Nine Thousand One Hundred and Sixty Five Only)	All that Piece & Parcel of The Property Being: Property No. 174, E Swathu No. 152900302801200211, Situated At Kalludevanahalli Village, Magadi Taluk, Ramanagar District, Karnataka, India, 562159. Area Admeasuring (In Sq. Ft.): Property Type: Land_Area, Built_Up_Area, Carpet_Area Property Area: 735.00, 725.00, 580.00. Bounded By: North: Property Bearing Sy. No. 11/1, South: Property Bearing Sy. No. 11/1, East: Property Bearing Sy. No. 11/1 And Road, West: House of Jayalakshmamma & Property Bearing Sy 11/1.

If the said Borrowers fail to make payment to IIFL HFL as aforesaid, IIFL HFL may proceed against the above secured assets under Section 13(4) of the said Act, and the applicable Rules, entirely at the risks, costs and consequences of the Borrowers. For, further details please contact to **Authorised Officer at** 'SOMA MERIT', No.9, Ground Floor, Venkataswamy Naidu Street, Taskar Town, Shivajinagar, Bangalore 560051 **Or Corporate Office: IIFL Tower,** Plot No. 98, Udyog Vihar, Ph-IV Gurgaon, Haryana.

Place: Bangalore, Date: 11-03-2024 **Sd/- Authorised Officer, For IIFL Home Finance Ltd.**

IDFC First Bank Limited
(Formerly known as IDFC Bank Ltd) | CIN : L65110TN2014PLC097792
Registered Office: - KRM Towers, 7th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai- 600031. Tel : +91 44 4564 4000 | Fax: +91 44 4564 4022

IDFC FIRST Bank

APPENDIX- IV-A [See proviso to rule 8 (6)] SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s), Co-Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) as per column (ii) that the below described immovable properties as per column (iii) mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Formerly known as IDFC Bank Ltd, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 19.04.2024 as described hereunder, for the recovery of amount due to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (Formerly known as IDFC Bank Ltd) from Borrower (s) and Co-Borrower (s) as per column (i).
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on IDFC FIRST Bank website i.e. www.idfcfirstbank.com.

S. NO	(i) Demand Notice Amount	(ii) Name of Borrower (s), Co-Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s)	(iii) MORTGAGED PROPERTY ADDRESS	(iv) Reserve Price Amount	(v) EMD Amount	(vi) Date and Time of Auction	(vii) Date and Time EMD of Auction	(viii) Date and Time of Inspection	(ix) Authorized Officer Name & Contact Number
1	INR 3,13,98,700/- Demand Notice dated: 08-April-2022	**J Lal And Sons, Jawahar Lal, Sameer Agarwal & Aruna Aggarwal**	**Property 1:-** All That Piece And Parcel Of A Portion Of The Property Bearing Old No. 40, Municipal No. 45 (45-29), Situated At Hale Gangamma Cheri Palya, Now Bearing New Municipal No. 29, New Gangamma Cheri, Mothinagar, Kalasipalya, Banaglore, Bbmp Ward No. 47, Pid No. 47-63-29, Property Now Comes Under The Limits Of Bbmp, Measuring East To West 13.9 Feet And North To South 30.4 Feet Out of The Said Property Admeasuring On The Eastern Side North To South 54 Feet And Western Side North To South 50 Feet And On The Northern Side East To West 30 Feet, Southern Side East To West 30 Feet Having A Residential/ Commercial R.C.C Roofed Building With Red Oxide Floring And Jungle Wood And Bounded As : East : Primeses No. 28 Private Property, West : Premises No. 29, North: Mothinagar Street & South: A Portion Of Belongs To Vendor And Kalasi Palyam It' Croos **Property 2:-** All That Piece And Parcel Of House On Side No. 28 & 29, House List No. 289/1, Situated At B.Narayan Village, K.R.Puram Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Property Now Comes Under The Limits Of Bbmp, Measuring East To West 70 Feet And North To South 40 Feet, Totally Measuring 2800 Sq. Ft., And Bounded As:-East: Vendor'S Property, West: Road, North: Private Property & South: Road	**INR 2,29,89,025/-**	INR 22,98,902.5/-	**19th April 2024 11.00 AM to 1.00 PM**	18th April 2024 10.00 AM to 5.00 PM	**11th April 2024 1.00 PM to 4.00 PM**	Name - Mr. Sudeep Sinha Contact Number- 9833455452 Name- Samson Castelino Contact Number- 9164040717
2	INR 86,97,028/- Demand Notice dated: 15-October-2022	**S Santhosh & Madhu G R**	All That Piece And Parcel Of Apartment / Flat Bearing No.203 On The First Floor, Admeasuring Of 1283 Sq. Ft. (Super Built Up Area) With Two Bedrooms, A Kitchen, Inclusive Of Proportionate Share In Common Areas Along With One Covered Car Parking Space., Of The Apartment Building Known As 'Advaitha' Constructed On The Property Bearing Bda No. 93/D, Present Bbmp Katha No. 93/D, Situated At 2Nd Main Road, 2Nd Stage, Industrial Suburb, Rajajinagar Industrial Layout, Banglore, And Bounded As: Set Back Set Back Passage And Ots Duct And Flat No. 202	**INR 92,81,000/-**	INR 9,28,100/-	**19th April 2024 11.00 AM to 1.00 PM**	18th April 2024 10.00 AM to 5.00 PM	**11th April 2024 1.00 PM to 4.00 PM**	Name - Preeti Toshniwal Contact Number- 9694702013 Name- Samson Castelino Contact Number- 9164040717
3	INR 93,38,040/- Demand Notice dated: 01-October-2022	**Babulal Juharji & Anitha Devi**	All That Piece And Parcel Of Flat Bearing No. 206 On The First Floor Having Super Built Up Area Of 1433 Sq. Ft. With Three Bedrooms, A Kitchen, Inclusive Of Proportionate Share In Common Areas Along With One Covered Car Parking Space, The Apartement Building Known As "Advaitha" Constructed On Property/Land Bearing Bda No. 93/D, Present Bbmp Katha No. 93/D, Situated At 2Nd Main Road, 2nd Stage, Industrial Suburb, Rajajinagar Industrial Layout, Bangalore, And, Bounded As: Boundaries Of The Said Flat:- East: Passage & Ots West: Set Back North: Duct & Flat No. 205 South: Duct & Flat No. 204 Boundaries Of The Property/Land:- East: Road West: Private Property North: Site No. 93/E South: Site No. 93/C	**INR 1,03,31,000/-**	INR 10,33,100/-	**19th April 2024 11.00 AM to 1.00 PM**	18th April 2024 10.00 AM to 5.00 PM	**11th April 2024 1.00 PM to 4.00 PM**	Name- Preeti Toshniwal Contact Number- 9694702013 Name- Samson Castelino Contact Number- 9164040717

Disclaimer: Please note that the said notice is issued for sale of immovable property only and IDFC FIRST Bank Limited has no right to sale of the movable assets, if any, present at the immovable property.

Sd/-
Authorised Officer
IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
(Formerly known as IDFC Bank Ltd)

Date : 11.03.2024

EDITORIAL

In order for me to write poetry that isn't political, I must listen to the birds. And in order to hear the birds, the warplanes must be silent

Marwan Makhoul

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Ramnath Goenka

PICK UPRIGHT OFFICERS TO FILL UP VACANCIES IN THE APEX POLL BODY

WHEN a member of the Election Commission of India (ECI) who is in line to become the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) suddenly puts in his papers, it does sound odd. Particularly when it happens just before the general elections schedule is to be announced. Bureaucrats have skins thicker than those of Kaziranga's rhinos. Yet, Election Commissioner Arun Goel sent his resignation letter to President Droupadi Murmu on March 8 without copying it to his boss, CEC Rajiv Kumar. With three more years left in the poll body, he led the succession queue as the CEC after Rajiv Kumar's retirement in February next year. While Goel politely attributed his departure to a personal decision, his peer group suggested he had no health issues. Whether or not he had differences with the establishment is not known but the fact remains that the IAS officer from the Punjab cadre was handpicked by them during his induction.

His tenure began rather controversially in November 2022 as a Constitution bench of the Supreme Court had made sharp observations about how he was picked—at the pace of a bullet train in just a day. It went on to inject the Chief Justice of India into the EC selection committee to end its arbitrary functioning. Months later, the government wrested back control by amending the law to show the CJI the door. The three-member selection panel now comprises the prime minister as its chairperson; the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha as a member; and a Union cabinet minister nominated by the PM as the second member. Goel's exit reduced the three-member ECI to a single-member body at present as his colleague Anup Chandra Pandey retired in February. It's not yet clear whether he can be compared with his gutsy predecessor Ashok Lavasa who paid the price for issuing dissent notes on various model code violation decisions taken by the ECI during the last Lok Sabha polls.

With the establishment having two votes in the selection committee, its pick will be final in filling up the two ECI vacancies. It can either go for spineless babus or do the right thing by selecting upright officers with impeccable public stature. For context, Justice Krishna Iyer predated the collegium system but lifted the judiciary through his sheer brilliance. That's the level of ability the country needs in people occupying the highest constitutional posts of the land. Anything less would be a disservice to democracy.

BJP PLAYS HARDBALL AS TDP RETURNS TO NDA FOLD

AFTER a five-year long breakup, the TDP is back in the NDA. It was expected but the twists and turns and even an earful from the BJP's central leadership—as confessed by the party's ally and Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan, who played the role of a mediator—points at a crucial difference from the earlier live-in relationship TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu had with the saffron party. This time, it is the latter that is calling the shots which is why the joint statement issued on Saturday clarified that seat-sharing would be announced in a day or two, indicating tough bargaining by the BJP.

It is likely the BJP-Jana Sena combine would accept nothing less than eight seats out of the 25 in Andhra Pradesh irrespective of its winning prospects. What would each side gain from this alliance? Facing a strong YSRC with Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, the TDP realises correctly that it may not win on its own. It is banking on Kapu community votes from Jana Sena, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's popularity post the Ram Mandir inauguration and the dent Jagan's sister Y S Sharmila may cause to her brother's vote share to cross the rubicon. On paper, the strategy looks fine but there are hurdles and several ifs and buts when it comes to reality. As of now, the anti-incumbency against Jagan isn't as much as it seems for the TDP. The ease of living that has become the norm for the beneficiaries of Jagan's various schemes isn't something that can be dismissed outright. The development slogan and campaign against freebies may make economic sense for the rich and middle classes but isn't enough to persuade the rural voter. The TDP and its allies need to present a vision of development coupled with welfare that doesn't sound self-contradictory.

The BJP, even with Modi magic at play all over the country in 2019, was relegated to one per cent party in the State. There's no way it can win a few seats without a strong ally like the TDP. So, the alliance makes sense, particularly given its own target of 375 in the Lok Sabha. It had played the same game in the late 1990s and 2014 but with horrible consequences. It couldn't build on its support in the last 25 years despite notching up 18 per cent vote share in the late 1990s. In the long run, this is bound to backfire on the party unless Modi-Shah duo has some ace up their sleeves. In addition, the intense dissatisfaction among the Kapus for the perceived sellout by Pawan Kalyan to the TDP may spoil the plans of this grand alliance. Notwithstanding all this, the three parties have no choice but to join hands.

QUICK TAKE

PRESERVE TIBETAN LANGUAGE

On March 10, 1959, Tibetans rose up in protest against the presence of Chinese troops on their land. Back then, they were brutally crushed. Sixty-five years on, most world maps have ceased to depict Tibet as a separate territory. But now comes a series of reports on how China is systematically trying to erase the Tibetan language, including through colonial-style boarding schools. Several Indian scripts and languages including Maithili, Ahamiya, and Bangla owe a lot to the Tibetan system. India has a substantial collection of old and new texts in the Tibetan language. If China would not preserve such a rich, old language, Indian institutions can and should.

If the Trinamool Congress manages to fight off the BJP challenge and increase its seats in the upcoming elections, Mamata may emerge as the top leader in INDIA bloc

MAMATA-MODI REMATCH WITH INDIA IN TATTERS

MAKARAND PARANJAPE
Professor of English, Jawaharlal Nehru University

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

SOURAV ROY

THE inevitable has happened. Mamata Banerjee has decided to fight the upcoming Lok Sabha elections alone in West Bengal. Her decision comes after months of speculation and uncertainty over the fate of the Trinamool Congress-Congress-Left Front coalition that had formed in 2019 to take on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Why did Mamata Banerjee decide to go solo? The answer should be pretty obvious.

Mamata, who had initially agreed to the alliance as a tactical move, soon realised that it was not working in her favour. It was obvious from the body language of the leaders during the last meeting of the Opposition INDIA bloc, with Mamata and Rahul Gandhi, not seeing each other eye to eye. Mamata realised soon enough that the alliance was diluting her party's identity and image.

Moreover, it was also alienating her core supporters who had voted for her in preference not only to the Congress, but also the TMC's predecessor and earlier antagonist, the Communist Party of India Marxist (CPM). After all, the INDIA bloc had faced criticism in Bengal for being opportunistic and unnatural because the TMC and the Left had been bitter rivals for decades. Mamata also sensed that INDIA would not able to counter the BJP's narrative of nationalism, Hindutva, and corruption charges against her government.

The INDIA alliance, which had already been somewhat of a ragtag patchwork is now truly in tatters. And the cracks are so wide and deep that no length or width of band-aid will cover them, let alone offer a quantum of solace. What if the Congress had accepted Mamata's suggestion of fielding its party president Mallikarjun Kharge as prime ministerial candidate of the combined opposition? There is no point glancing backwards in regret over missed opportunities.

As if to rub salt on the Congress' wounds, the TMC has fielded popular cricketer Yusuf Pathan from Behampore against the Congress leader in Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury. Chowdhury has won this seat five times in the past. The Congress, in any case, would have only secured two, possibly three, constituencies had the alliance survived. But now they will have to fight for each seat on their own. They may even be wiped out completely. The die has been cast. There is no turning back.

It will be a straight fight between the TMC and the BJP. In 2019, their score was 22 (TMC) vs 18 (BJP), with vote percentages, 43.3 percent vs 40.7, also too close for comfort. We must not forget that just two years later, in 2021, Mamata managed to sweep the assembly elections, winning a whopping 215 seats. The BJP, with all its hype and fierce campaigning managed, only 77. But in the previous state elections in 2016, they only had won 3 seats. As such, they increased their tally by an incredible 74 seats and their vote share from 10.16 percent to 38.15 percent. The TMC held on to their bastion, though. They added four seats to their tally and their vote share inched ahead of 48 percent.

Mamata has been ruling West Bengal since 1998, over a quarter of a century. When it comes to the assembly elections, neither anti-incumbency nor the Modi magic are enough to disturb her apple cart. Mamata's "*Maa, Mati, Manush*"—Mother, Motherland, and Man—still holds sway over the people's hearts. The BJP's favourite playbook of polarising the voters along religious lines has not worked either. The Hindu votes have not consolidated en-block on the BJP side. What is more, the voters have shown a high degree of discrimination in voting back Mamata after giving Modi an unambiguous thumbs up just two years earlier in the general elections.

So what will it be this time? The 42 seats of West Bengal make it one of India's most important states, the leader in the eastern electoral zone. If the BJP increases its 2019 tally of 18 by even a couple of seats, it will take them closer to their declared target of 375 plus. For Mamata, it is not a life and death struggle because she remains at the helm of the state till 2026. But if she increases her seats more convincingly, she will be the principal opposition leader of the country, the only one able to take on Modi. Worse for the Congress, if Mamata wins big, the TMC will be the "real" Congress in the eyes not only of the people but of frustrated Congress leaders. Whatever happens, major political realignments are bound to take place after the results are in.

As for Mamata herself, who can doubt her fearlessness or will to power? Remember how in 1977, only 22, she dared "Loknayak" Jayaprakash Narayan to "Quit Bengal." As a Youth Congress leader, she stopped JP's entry into Kolkata (then Calcutta) by jumping onto the bonnet of his jeep. In the 1984 general elections, after Indira Gandhi's assassination, she scored a major upset by defeating the veteran Communist leader Somnath Chatterjee. She was not yet thirty. At that time, she was known as an ardent member of then prime minister Rajiv Gandhi's "shouting brigade." Jump to 1998: she took on both the CPM and the Tata group. She defeated the former but scored a pyrrhic victory in driving the latter out of Singur right into the welcoming arms of Modi in Gujarat. The voters did not forget, nor did they forgive her. In 2021, she lost her own seat in Nandigram and had to be reelected in a byelection.

Mamata now wants to shore up her own popularity and performance, especially given the multiple corruption charges against her party members, including the nearest of kin. Worse, the communal violence and charges of TMC as anti-Hindu and pro-Muslim. She must regain the trust of her loyal rural and female vote bank. As for the Muslims, most will vote for her.

She knows that the BJP, with its formidable electoral machine, unlimited war chest of money and muscle, plus the magic of Modi and machinations of Amit Shah, will go after her hammer and tongs. Let there be no illusions. This will not be a good fight. But its outcome will be awaited with bated breath. Unless, of course, there is a backdoor deal between Modi and Mamata. But as of now, Didi is the only woman left standing.

(Views are personal)
(On X @MakrandParanspe)

FORGOTTEN STORIES OF SHIVA *LILAS*

RENUKA NARAYANAN

FAITHLINE

MAHASHIVRATRI made me recall some legends of Lord Shiva that light up the land. Moreover, I remembered thinking during a trip to the Kangra Valley in Himachal Pradesh that while warring factions carry on fighting, the inner life of Bharat goes on peacefully. I saw that at the 17th century village of Paragpur in Kangra district. It was reportedly built on an ancient site and its habit of faith went on as though nothing had happened except the *lila* of the gods. It was very moving.

Paragpur was the stronghold of the Kuthialas, a branch of the Sood clan, who were treasurers to the royal family of Kangra. Next to Paragpur was Garli Village, a charming heritage site, which is the domicile of the Soods. They were Silk Route merchants, builders of cities like Simla, and patrons of commerce and culture. Their old homes showed their cross-continental history—an Italianate villa here, a Chinese lintel there—while not far away, the river Beas was witness to the advent of Alexander of Macedonia around 325 BCE.

Over the past many years, I've been by the Beas, on the Beas, across the Beas, and even in the Beas, and there's something about that river. It has so much personality, a mysterious air of 'I would if I could'—tell stories, I mean.

When I thought of how much history had flown with it and its old rulers, the Katoch clan, I wanted to nudge the Beas by its shoulder of delicately-tinted mauve stone and say in my most cajoling tone, "Won't you tell me of old, forgotten far-off things?"

I sat expectantly by the river soaking in the peace of the falling sunset. But all I could hear was the sound of the river and the call of a night-bird or two. Really, what had I expected? That a water sprite would swim up to tell me fabulous stories? I went back irrationally disappointed. But the Beas gave me a wonderful surprise one morning, something that I could not have imagined despite so many years of being amazed by 'the wonder that is India'.

This happened when I went to visit the Shri Kalinath Kaleshwar Mahadev Temple in Paragpur. Its story goes that in yet another ancient battle between the *devas* and the *asuras*, Parvati assumed the fierce form of Kali to defeat the aggressors. But she went on storming even after her victory, and Shiva had had to lie down inert in her path to stop her. Kali stepped right on him, roaring in rage, and only then did she come out of her fury, and recoil in horror when she saw what she had done. She went away greatly embarrassed, and it was here, at this site on the banks of the Beas, that Shiva is believed to have met her, brought her out of her depression and made her smile again.

I knew this story from childhood but I knew nothing of this small temple or its connection with this story. Incredibly, the sanyasis of the Niranjana Akhada who attended on 'Kalesar' as they call Kaleshwar locally were from South India. They retold the legend to me and I went back marveling at how deep and far the dotted lines run across our country. I felt blessed to have actually heard the legend of Kalinath Kaleshwar right there by the Beas where Shiva had persuaded Parvati to come back home to Kailash.

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

> When I thought of how much history had flown with it and its old rulers, the Katoch clan, I wanted to nudge the Beas by its shoulder of delicately-tinted mauve stone and say in my most cajoling tone, "Won't you tell me of old, forgotten far-off things?"

At the other end of the country, another Shiva story became the *sthala puranam* or source legend for one of India's most beautiful topographical features. The story goes that Shiva once spent a night in the Raghunandan Hills of Tripura on the way back to Kailash. With him were 99,99,999 followers, one short of a crore or "*Unakoti*". Shiva asked his followers to wake up before dawn. However, not one was awake on time except Shiva himself. So, Shiva went off on his own, leaving them behind. When they woke up and realised their mistake, they were too ashamed to move, and turned to stone, deciding to stay forever at the place where they had last seen Shiva. The rocks on the Unakoti Hill are said to be that entourage.

Up in the snows, Shiva overturned the very idea of creation. 'Brahma the Creator' was given the task of making people inhabit the three worlds. For *Bhulok*, the earth, Brahma first created four handsome young men to be the ancestors of mankind. They sat down to pray for guidance on the shore of Manasarovar Lake. Suddenly, a great white swan swam up. It was Shiva, the ultimate free soul or "supreme swan", the *Paramahamsa*. The swan swam all over the lake to symbolically warn the four young men that the world was merely *maya* or illusion, and that the only way to escape its bonds was to refuse to procreate. Shiva did that because he felt that it was only fair to warn them that creation was just a game for the gods.

Then, in the legend of Nilkanth when Shiva drank the Kalakuta poison to save the world, the *vishpurush* or spirit of Kalakuta sprang out weeping in shame at the outrage he had involuntarily committed by burning Shiva's throat, and in despair at the ferocity of his substance. So, the Lord, who wanted nothing for himself but gave things away to others, blessed him with a boon, for it was not Kalakuta's fault that it was so deadly. It grew fierce only when fiddled with, just as so many other things are poisonous only if we stir them up ourselves. Shiva granted the *vishpurush* the boon that he would return to Nature by being born on earth one day as Drona's son, Ashvatthama. Ashvatthama is believed to still wander the earth and comes forward only when we mess with Nature. Shiva's *lilas* are truly infinite and I would greatly enjoy retelling more another time.

(Views are personal)
(shebaba09@gmail.com)

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Care more

Ref: *This world is for dogs too* (March 10). The column has highlighted our apathy towards the welfare of street dogs. For them, every day is an ordeal. We must nurture a more caring attitude towards every abandoned animal. As the author pointed out, they too have the right to live with dignity.
A Abirami, email

Puducherry murder

Ref: *Child's murder calls for closer tab on drug rings* (March 9). The bloodcurdling incident of abduction, sexual abuse and murder of a 9-year-old girl in Puducherry has thrown the spotlight once again on drug abuse. People have been complaining about the thriving ganja/drug mafia in both the UT and Tamil Nadu, but not strong action has been taken. The authorities must waste no time in taking action against drug peddlers.
R Sampath, Chennai

EC's resignation

Election Commissioner Arun Goel's resignation, days before the announcement of election dates, is surprising. With his resignation, only CEC Rajiv Kumar remains in the three-member panel and there are now two vacancies to be filled. How Prime Minister Narendra Modi will fill these two vacancies will be interesting to watch.
NR Ramachandran, email

Guard democracy

With likely days left for the start of the Lok Sabha elections, Election Commissioner Arun Goel has resigned. The Opposition is trying to use his resignation as a weapon against the Centre questioning whether he resigned due to a difference of opinion with the PM. Whatever be the arguments on both sides, independence of the Election Commission is indispensable for a democratic country.
Jaya Thampi, email

Memorable series

Ref: *India's series of blows to England* (March 10). It was a 7-star victory for India cricket team against England. Five Indian batsmen scored half-centuries with two of them managing to hit centuries. An excellent 4-1 series win against England. This is one to remember for a long time. Both new comers and veterans played well.
P V Srinivas Sreelekha, Secunderabad

Strong comeback

When India lost the first Test match against England in Hyderabad, we thought it is going to be a tough series. But hats off to our players for their determined fight back, we managed in the end to clinch the series 4-1 and top the WTC points table. It was a very interesting Test series.
N Mahadevan, Chennai

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS
Chairman of the Board: **Manoj Kumar Sonthalia** Editor: **Santwana Bhattacharya**
Published by **R K Jhunjhunwala** on behalf of Express Publications (Madurai) Private Limited, at No. 1, Queen's Road, Bengaluru - 560 001 and printed by him at Express Press, Plot No. 2A, Bommasandra Industrial Area, 4th Phase, Survey No. 46, Part Yarandahalli Village, Jigani Hobli, Anekal Taluk. Bengaluru - 560 099. **Bengaluru.** Vol. 60, No. 61 RNI Reg. No. 3457/1960. Phone: 080-22866893. **Copyright:** Express Publications (Madurai) Private Limited. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any manner, electronic or otherwise, in whole or in part, without prior written permission is prohibited.

Suvendu Adhikari @SuvenduWB

Sheikh Shahjahan is just one of the many criminals on whom the TMC relies on to win elections by force and deceit. In turn they are given free hand to establish their fiefdom.

Jairam Ramesh @Jairam_Ramesh

The Election Commission has for 8 months now refused to meet INDIA parties on the issue of VVPATs that are so essential to prevent Electronic Voting Manipulation.

Sitaram Yechury @SitaramYechury

EC's credibility in conducting the constitutionally mandated free & fair elections, ensuring a level playing field, cannot be compromised.

'EFTA wanted to sign trade pact with India before polls'

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

THE European Free Trade Association (ETFA) was racing against time and hoping to get the Free Trade Agreement signed with India before elections were announced in India. It took nearly 16 years for this agreement to fructify.

"We were running against the clock as we wanted to finalise the FTA before elections. We remained positive and pushed ourselves to achieve this," Swiss Secretary for Economic Affairs, **Helene Budliger Artieda** told this newspaper.

However, the agreement needs to be ratified in the EFTA Parliament, which is likely to take place in the autumn of this year around September/October.

"We are innovative in Switzerland and we managed to introduce an investment pledge and a job pledge for this agreement linked to goods and market access. But Switzerland is known for innovation and our secretariat in EFTA worked hard to achieve it," Artieda said, adding that they are glad to cross the finishing line first.

India is still working on an FTA with the UK and EU. It is difficult at this point to state whether there would be any overlap between the EFTA and the other two FTAs. But this certainly would give more clarity to the other two FTAs in terms of what to go ahead with.

Meanwhile, EFTA has 34 FTAs across 44 countries. Their largest FTA is with EU followed by China. They are hoping that Sunday's agreement with India will be among the largest.

The FTA with China was signed a decade ago. "The idea was to strike a balanced deal with a country as large as India. We have managed to strike a balance," Artieda said.

EFTA is now looking at a similar agreement in Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia and they feel that signing one with India will help them in finalizing these as well.

Why did Goel quit ahead of elections, Oppn asks govt

Parties want govt to clear stand on EC's exit at crucial juncture

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

A DAY after Election Commissioner Arun Goel resigned from his post, Opposition parties attacked the Modi government and demanded a clear statement on the circumstances in which the situation has emerged.

Goel resigned on Saturday, days before the expected announcement of the schedule for the Lok Sabha elections.

Terming the development alarming, the politbureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) said that it created an atmosphere of uncertainty on the eve of the general election to the 18th Lok Sabha.

"With the new law on the appointment of ECs, the composition of the Election Commission is under the complete control of the government. This situation raises concerns that need to be addressed to ensure the credibility of the Constitutional entity and its capacity to conduct free and fair polls," the party said.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh asked whether Goel resigned over personal reasons as cited by him in his resignation letter or to contest the LS polls on a BJP ticket like former Calcutta High Court judge Abhijit Gangopadhyay.

"The resignation of Arun Goel as Election Commissioner last evening raises three questions: Did he actually resign over differences with the Chief Election Commissioner or with the Modi government, which does the front-seat driving for all supposedly independent institutions? Or, did he resign for personal reasons? Or, did he, like the Calcutta High Court judge a few days back, resign to contest the forthcoming Lok Sabha polls on a BJP ticket," Ramesh asked in a post on X.

"Each passing day in Modi's India deals an added blow to democracy and democratic institutions," he added.

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut said the ECI is no longer an autonomous watchdog, but an extended branch of the ruling BJP. The Sharad Pawar-led NCP said Goel's sudden resignation appeared suspicious.

"Did he resign because he had a doubt that elections would not be held in a free and fair manner? Did he voice it, therefore asked to leave? The government must answer," Pawar said in a statement.

Names of new ECs likely by March 15

The Central government is likely to appoint two Election Commissioners (EC) by March 15, a process necessitated by the resignation of Arun Goel on Friday and the retirement of Anup Chandra Pandey in February. A search committee under Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal and comprising the Home Secretary and the Department of Personnel and Training Secretary is preparing two separate panels of five names each for the two posts. Later, a selection committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and comprising a Union minister and Leader of the Congress party in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury will then name the two appointees. The election commissioners will be appointed by the President. Sources said the selection committee could meet either on March 13 or 14 depending on the convenience of the members and the appointments are likely to be made by March 15.

POWER GAMES

SHAHID FARIDI

The writer is Resident Editor TNIE, New Delhi. Follow him on X@Shahid_Faridi_

Rajya Sabha Polls

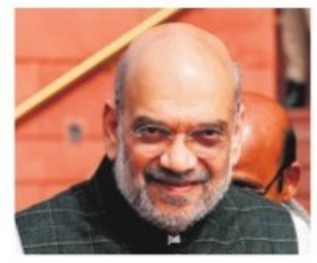
CONGRESS GIVES IN TO JMM TO AVOID HP REPEAT

The Congress has given up its claim on the Rajya Sabha seat in Jharkhand that has fallen vacant due to the end of tenure of the party's Dheeraj Sahu. The JMM boss and former chief minister, Hemant Soren, who is in jail on corruption charges, forced the Congress to leave the seat for his party's Sarfaraj Ahmad. Soren had recently got Sarfaraz to resign as an MLA from Gandey assembly constituency from where he plans to field his wife Kalpana Soren. In return, Sarfaraz was promised a Rajya Sabha nomination. When the vacancy arose, the Congress demanded the seat as it belongs to the party's quota. Soren told the Congress leadership that he has already promised the seat to Sarfaraz as part of a plan to save the coalition government in the state after his resignation. Sources said that the Congress leadership decided not to press the matter after it received reports that a large number of its MLAs in Jharkhand are not happy and some are even in touch with the BJP. The party did not want a repeat of the Himachal Pradesh episode in Jharkhand. This is not the first time that the two Jharkhand allies have clashed over a Rajya Sabha seat. The fight when a vacancy arose last time was so fierce that the then AICC general secretary in charge of Jharkhand, Avinash Pande, directed the party's MLAs to boycott the chief minister for two months to build pressure on him to leave the seat for the party. Soren, however, stood his ground and took the seat. With the desertion of the party's MLAs threatening the survival of its government in Himachal, the Congress leadership has decided to yield ground to the JMM and not rock the boat in another state.

Coalition Tales

NITISH TO EXPAND MINISTRY ON RETURN FROM UK

Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar will expand his ministry after his return from the United Kingdom on March 13. The ministry expansion was delayed by the chief minister for over a month to build pressure on his coalition partner, BJP, over his demand for holding the state assembly elections along with the Lok Sabha polls. The BJP does not want simultaneous polls as the party leadership feels it will distract its workers from the Lok Sabha elections which is its primary focus. Sources said that the chief minister has agreed to go along with his coalition partner on the issue. Nitish had taken oath on January 28 this year for the record ninth time. Along with him eight ministers — three each from the JD(U) and the BJP, one from Jitan Ram Manjhi's Hindustan Awam Morch and one independent — also took oath. The BJP and JD(U) have divided the main departments between them. But the full ministry is yet to be formed. According to sources, the chief minister has decided to give in to the BJP's desire not to hold the state and parliament election together.



Congress to hold second poll panel meet today, may field senior leaders

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

THE Congress will hold a second meeting of the Central Election Committee (CEC) on Monday to decide candidates for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

On Sunday, speaking on the sidelines of **Rahul Gandhi**'s Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra event in Gujarat, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said that the party will release its second list in the evening after the meeting. "The second meeting of the CEC will take place on Monday at 6 pm. The second list of candidates will be announced after the meeting," he said.

According to sources, the CEC is expected to decide the seats in Delhi, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Assam. The names for Uttar Pradesh may also come up for discussion, said a source.

Congress released its first list of 39 candidates on Friday, which included party bigwigs such as Rahul Gandhi, former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, Congress general secretary KC Venugopal, and MP Shashi Tharoor. Of the 39 candidates, 15 were from Kerala, seven from Karnataka, six from Chhattisgarh, four from Telangana, two from Meghalaya and one each from Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim and Lakshadweep.

As the suspense over Rahul Gandhi contesting from Amethi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra making her electoral debut from Rae Bareli Lok Sabha seats continues, the Uttar Pradesh Congress Pradesh Election Committee on Sunday unanimously adopted a resolution to field the Gandhi siblings from these seats.

With the party fielding several senior leaders in the first list, sources said that more senior leaders are likely to be figured in the next round.

From Haryana, former CM Bhupinder Hooda, and his son and Rajya Sabha MP Deepender Hooda may be recommended, said a leader. Another leader said that the high command has also asked former Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot and his former deputy Sachin Pilot to contest in the Lok Sabha polls. The reasoning has been to ramp up the tally of the party in the Lower House.

Bengal BJP mocks TMC's choice of some candidates

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

AFTER the TMC declared the names of candidates for 42 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal on Sunday, the state BJP co-in charge and chief of BJP IT department, Amit Malviya, launched a scathing attack on the list.

In a volley of posts on micro-blogging site X, Malviya said the Trinamool list is a damp squib."Seven of the 42 (17%) names in the list were those discarded from BJP — Shatrughan Sinha (Asansole), Kirti Azad (Bardhman-Durgapur), Krishna Kalyani (Raiganj), Mukut Mani Adhikari (Ranaghat), Sujata Mondal (Bishnupur), Biswajit Das (Bagaon) and Biplab Mitra (Balurghat). Doesn't the TMC have candidates of their own?" Malviya asked, adding, "Of the candidates, Shatrughan Sinha, Kirti Azad and Yusuf Pathan are bohiragotos (outsiders). Didn't the party find enough sons of the soil?"

The BJP leader said that TMC candidate Abu Taher Khan had killed a six-year-old child. "Abu Taher Khan, whose SUV dragged and killed a six-year-old child, has been fielded from Murshidabad. Did the TMC have a dearth of criminals that Mamata Banerjee needed Taher on the list? And of course Mahua Moitra, who was expelled from Parliament for several violations and emerged as a face of impropriety," he wrote.

He also mocked the TMC for fielding less number of Muslim candidates. "Desperate to shed the appeasement charge, TMC has fielded just six Muslim candidates, compared to seven last time," said Malviya.

IMD predicts snowfall in Himalayas, rain in plains; wheat crop may suffer

JITENDRA CHOUBEY @ New Delhi

Western disturbance

Under the influence of the current western disturbance, there would be light to moderate rainfall and snowfall in Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit, Baltistan, Muzaffarabad, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand from March 10-12.

TWO western disturbances are likely to cause snowfall in higher reaches of the Himalayas and rainfall with thunderstorms and gusty winds in the plains this week, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said in a bulletin on Sunday.

Experts are worried about lodging of wheat crop, which will be ready for harvest in a few weeks.

Under the influence of the current western disturbance, there would be light to moderate rainfall and snowfall in Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit, Baltistan, Muzaffarabad, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand during March 10-12. Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, western UP and north Rajasthan would get rainfall with gusty wind on March 13.

Another moderate western disturbance on March 13 would cause rainfall with gusty winds and snowfall in northwestern India. Thunderstorms and lightning are likely over Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit, Baltistan and Muzaffarabad on March 13, and over Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand on March 13-14, IMD said.

"If there would be lodging of crops due to gusty winds, the wheat crops will get impacted in Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan," said Bhudeva Singh Tyagi, principal scientist, Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research. "Hailstorm and unseasonal rain would mostly impact mustard and gram crops and wheat crops in dry region."

Rajasthan-based traders are worried that unseasonal rainfall would impact the quality of wheat crops. "Last week hailstorms and rainfall already delayed the harvesting of crops. If rain happens, it may impact the quality of wheat," said CP Gupta of Chesta Enterprise in Rajasthan.

Rail Roko: Train movements hit in Punjab as farmers squat on tracks

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

MOVEMENT of trains was affected in Punjab on Sunday after agitating farmers squatted on tracks at over 70 places in the state as part of a nationwide 'rail roko' protest.

The protest, called by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (non-political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) to press the Centre to accept their demands, including a legal guarantee of minimum support price, was held from 12 noon till 4 pm.

In Haryana, many farmers were detained by the police in Dabwali and Ellenabad as they headed to the protest sites.

"Till a concrete resolution is offered by the government to our demands, we will continue our struggle," said KMM general secretary Sarwan Singh Pandher.

The ongoing sit-in at the Shambhu border continued. Farmer leaders Pandher and Jagjit Singh Dallewal claimed that their 'rail roko' agitation was successful. They said the protest was held at 75 locations in Punjab, five in Haryana, three each in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan and 20 locations in Tamil Nadu.

SKM coordinator Dallewal said the agitation shows that farmers across the country are part of this protest.

Ministry gives women central role in water conservation campaigns

JITENDRA CHOUBEY @ New Delhi

IN recognition of their integral role in water conservation and management work, the Jal Shakti ministry, in collaboration with state governments, has trained 24 lakh women to test piped water samples.

"Women are playing a leading role in water conservation efforts. Without their support, our flagship programmes and campaigns, such as Jal Shakti Abhiyan, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Jal Jeevan Mission and Atal Bhujal Yojna, would not have succeeded," Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, said on Sunday.

He was launching the fifth edition of the 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain' campaign. Themed 'Nari Shakti se Jal Shakti', the campaign underscores the crucial role of women in the initiative.

Besides, the Atal Bhujal Yojna ensures representation of at least 33 per cent of women members in gram panchayats for preparation of water budget and water security plans.

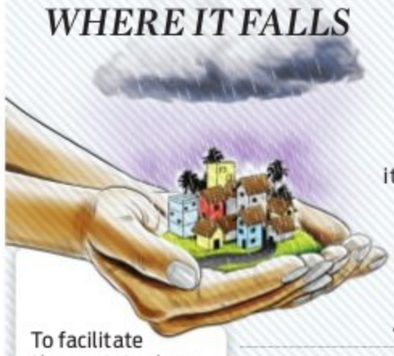
National Water Mission's campaign 'Catch The Rain' with the tagline, 'Catch the rain, where it falls, when it falls' is to nudge the states and stakeholders to create appropriate Rain Water Harvesting Structures (RWHS) suitable to the climatic conditions and sub-soil strata before monsoon.

The campaign undertakes drives to make check dams, water harvesting pits and rooftop RWHS; remove encroachments and desilts tanks to increase their storage capacity; removes obstructions in the channels that bring water from the catchment areas, with the active participation of people.

To facilitate these activities, states have been requested to set up 'rain centers' in each district — in collectorates, municipalities or gram panchayats.

'Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain' campaign started in 2021 as part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Jal Sanchay. The Ministry launched Jal Shakti Abhiyan in 2019 as a 'Jan Andolan' to initiate water conservation at the grassroots level through citizens' participation to accelerate water conservation nationwide.

The campaign also takes initiatives to enumerate the water bodies in the districts (checked with revenue records) besides removing encroachments.


CATCH THE RAIN, WHERE IT FALLS
National Water Mission's campaign with the tagline 'Catch the rain, where it falls, when it falls' was started in
2021
The campaign aims to nudge states and other stakeholders to create rain water harvesting structures suitable to the climatic conditions and sub-soil strata before monsoon
To facilitate these, states have been requested to open 'rain centers' in each district — in collectorates, municipalities or gram panchayat offices
The campaign undertakes drives to
make check dams, water-harvesting pits and rooftop RWHS
removes encroachments and de-silts tanks to increase their storage capacity
removes obstructions in the channels that bring water from catchment areas
repairs step-wells and uses defunct borewells and unused wells to put water back to aquifers

BJP's Hisar MP Brijendra Singh exits saffron camp, joins Cong

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

IN a setback to the Bharatiya Janata Party ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, Brijendra Singh , the BJP MP from Haryana, resigned and joined the Congress on Sunday.

He was inducted into the party by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge in the presence of senior party leaders, including Ajay Maken, Mukul Wasnik and Deepak Babaria.

"I have resigned from the primary membership of BJP, due to compelling political reasons. I extend gratitude to the party, National President J P Nadda, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amit Shah for giving me the opportunity to serve as the Member of Parliament for Hisar," he wrote on X.

Addressing the media, he said for a long time he was not comfortable with the BJP for ideological reasons. "One issue that was raised in the rally in Jind on October 2 was about the BJP-JJP alliance in Haryana. A decision was taken regarding it and that too is a reason for quitting BJP," he said.

Singh is the son of former Union minister and BJP leader Chaudhary Birender Birender Singh. Ajay Maken said that the veteran leader had informed them that he will join the Congress at a public rally.

MAOIST ENCOUNTER

Jharkhand police on Sunday claimed that a Maoist was killed and a few others sustained bullet injuries in a fierce encounter with security forces in Hazaribag district. The body was yet to be recovered, they said.

4 DEAD AS TRUCK OVERTURNS ON CAR IN CHHATTISGARH

INDIA	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	29	15	Mumbai	35	29
Bhopal	32	19	Panaji	32	28
Jaipur	31	15	Patna	41	27
Amritsar	26	12	Lucknow	42	27
Chennai	32	26	Port Blair	34	28
Kolkata	33	21	Imphal	23	18
Srinagar	12	04	Chandigarh	42	23

PM attacks dynastic rule on SP turf

Modi inaugurates, lays foundation stones for projects worth over ₹34,700 cr across UP

NAMITA BAJPAI @Lucknow

MAKING a strong pitch for breaching the 400-mark in the upcoming general elections in the Samajwadi Party bastion Azamagarh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday launched an attack on previous "dynastic" governments which he said ruled by dividing society on caste lines and following the politics of appeasement.

"Your love and affection along with the development of Azamgarh have taken away the sleep of INDIA bloc that is dependent on casteism, dynasty and appeasement for votes. For decades Poorvanchal has witnessed the politics of casteism and appeasement. Dynastic governments, soaked in corruption, never gave development a chance," Modi said, addressing a rally in Azamgarh after inaugurating and laying the foundation stones of developmental projects, including airports, worth over ₹34,700 crore across Uttar Pradesh.

The airports launched included that of Mundri of Azamgarh, Shravasti, Moradabad, Aligarh, Chitrakoot and a new terminal of Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport in Lucknow. "Azamgarh, once considered to be a backward district and a nursery of crime and terror, is now a shining star scripting a new chapter of development," the PM said, taking a dig at the opposition over their poll promises not seeing the light of the day.

PM Narendra Modi with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during the foundation stone laying of various developmental projects in Azamgarh | PTI

Modi cautioned people against seeing the development projects being inaugurated by him through the prism of elections. "By now, you must have realised that Modi 'doosri mitti ka bana hua hai' (Modi is a human being made up of different clay). Even in 2024, nobody should see it (inauguration of projects and laying of foundation stones) through the prism of elections. It is my eternal journey to fulfil my resolve of making the country a developed nation by 2047," he said.

"In the last election, the family, which considered Azamgarh its bastion, was defeated by a youth like Dinesh (Dinesh Lal Yadav MP of Azamgarh)," Modi said. SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav won the Azamgarh seat in 2014, and after him, Akhilesh won it in 2019.

"Due to this 'parivaarvad,' opposition people are so frustrated that they abuse Modi. They say that Modi doesn't have a family. They forget that the 140 crore population is the family of Modi," the prime minister said, referring to RJD chief Lalu Prasad, who in a rally asked him why he did not have a family.

Women get first tranche of funds in BJP's C'garh

EJAZ KAISER @Raipur

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday virtually launched Mahtari Vandan Yojana, one of the ambitious schemes of the BJP government in Chhattisgarh, aimed at boosting women empowerment.

Under the scheme, financial assistance of ₹1,000 per month is provided to all eligible married women of the state who are above 21 years of age. The scheme has benefited around 70 lakh women so far.

"Our government is committed to ensuring the holistic well-being of every family, and this begins with the health and dignity of the women. When the mother and daughters become strong, the family gets strengthened," he said.

The BJP government has fulfilled its promise by disbursing the first instalment of the Mahtari Vandan yojana amounting to ₹655 crore, he added. With the primary objective of empowering women, the scheme aims to improve the health, nutrition levels of women and enhance their economic self-reliance.

Adhir in direct fight with Pathan in his stronghold

PRANAB MONDAL @Kolkata

WITH cricketer Yusuf Pathan fielded as the TMC candidate from Berhampore, Bengal is likely to witness an intense electoral battle between the greenhorn, known for his pinch-hitting on the cricket field, and seasoned politician, five-time Congress MP, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.

As Muslim electorates form nearly 67% of the total voters in the constituency and the Left Front-ally RSP bagged less than 1% of votes in the previous general elections, the BJP appears to be a insignificant factor in Chowdhury's bastion.

Fielding Pathan in Berhampore is said to be Mamata Banerjee's smartest move in the upcoming polls against the state Congress chief, also staunch critic of the incumbent government. "If there is 7% swing in Muslim votes, Chowdhury's journey to the Lok Sabha will come to an end. Our party supremo's decision to bring Pathan to take on Chowdhury, whom she found responsible for the deadlock in seat-sharing discussions with INDIA bloc partner in Bengal, is going to erase the Congress from Bengal," said a senior TMC leader.

Yusuf Pathan

Adhir R Chowdhury

Though the Congress is yet to announce its candidates in Bengal, Chowdhury is most anticipated to contest from Berhampore Lok Sabha constituency, often referred to as his bastion; a seat he has held since 1999, against all political opposition. Though Chowdhury won the seat in 2019 with a margin of 80,000 votes, the TMC was behind only 6% in terms vote-share.

Chowdhury's reaction after the announcement of Pathan's candidature, too, reflected the possibility of a keen contest in the upcoming electoral exercise in West Bengal.

"He (Pathan) could have been fielded from his home state Gujarat by the TMC as INDIA's candidate. But he has been fielded from Berhampore to divide Muslim voters," barbed Chowdhury.

SRINAGAR DIARY

FAYAZ WANI
Our correspondent in Jammu and Kashmir
fayazwani123@gmail.com

Ladakh innovator on 21-day climate fast

The Ladakh innovator and educationist Sonam Wangchuk is on 21-day climate fast to demand 6th Schedule status, statehood and conservation of cold desert of Ladakh. Wanghcuk started his fast two days after the March 4 talks between the Ladakh leaders and the MHA failed to make any headway on grant of statehood and 6th Schedule status to Ladakh to protect the region's fragile ecology and culture. The Ladakh parties are also demanding separate Lok Sabha seats for Kargil and Leh districts. "21 days of fast happens to be the longest fast that father of nation Mahatma Gandhi kept for the independence of India. I want to follow the same peaceful path that Mahatma Gandhi followed," he said.

Police conduct census of shops and hotels

After households, the police is conducting a 'census' of shops and hotels in Kashmir and seeking personal details of the shopkeepers, hoteliers and their employees. They are distributing a "Census Form" in Srinagar and other parts of the Valley which requires personal details such as their qualification, profession, Aadhar number, mobile phone numbers. The hoteliers have been asked to share the details about the rooms available in their hotels. Police is already conducting a census of households and have sought personal details of families including latitude-longitude of the property and CCTV cameras, if any, installed.

Seaplane services likely to begin in Kashmir

In order to boost tourism in Kashmir, the administration is mulling the introduction of Seaplane services connecting Dal Lake in Srinagar to Manasbal in central Kashmir's Ganderbal. The Mumbai-based operator Maritime Energy Heli Air Services Pvt Ltd (MEHAIR) is likely to take the role of the operator for the project. The security aspects are under consideration and tourism stakeholders hope that it would significantly boost tourism in the region. Initially, the MEHAIR may deploy a single-engine Seaplane with a capacity of nine passengers and two pilots in Kashmir. The Seaplane service will be yet another attraction for the tourists visiting the picturesque place.

Badal urges Akali unity in BJP leaders' presence, but no word on alliance yet

HARPREET BAJWA @Chandigarh

AT the first death anniversary of former Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal, Shiromani Akali Dal chief **Sukhbir Singh Badal** again appealed to all splinter Akali groups to reunite. Punjab BJP chief Sunil Jakhar and another state party leader Arvind Khanna were present on the occasion. However, there was no announcement on the SAD-BJP alliance.

Addressing a gathering at Badal village, Sukhbir called for "complete Panthic and Punjabi unity to secure social, economic and political justice for the state and to take Punjabis into the next era of development and progress."

He underlined the need for peace and communal harmony under a people-friendly government in Punjab. "It is impossible to become Badal (senior) but I assure you I am ready to sacrifice everything for the 'quom' and Punjab," he said.

Paying tributes to the former CM, Punjab BJP chief Sunil Jakhar said: "Badal's humility was unparalleled.'' Terming Badal as a Vikas Purush, Jakhar said the Akali patriarch was a true statesman who allied with the BJP after more than a decade of strife to usher in peace and communal harmony in the state, Jakhar said and recalled how the former CM always stood for federalism.

INLD patriarch and former chief minister of Haryana Om Parkash Chautala said also paid his tributes to Badal. "He spent more than a decade in jail for the welfare of Punjabis. He worked hard for farmers and agricultural workers.''

Deputy Chief Minister of Haryana and Jan Nayak Janata Party leader Dushyant Chautala called Parkash Singh Badal as Nelson Mandela of Punjab politics. Haryana minister Choudhary Ranjit Singh termed Badal a pious soul.

CPI leader Bant Singh Brar lauded the contribution of the Akali patriarch in strengthening federalism and appealed to all parties to take up unfinished tasks like ensuring the transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab, safeguarding the state's river waters besides ensuring justice for jailed Sikhs.

Raj Cong faces jolt as 2 dozen leaders join BJP

RAJESH ASNANI @Jaipur

OVER two dozen Congress leaders in Rajasthan, including former ministers Rajendra Yadav and Lal Chand Kataria, joined the BJP in Jaipur on Sunday ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Former MLA from Degana Richpal Mirdha, his son Vijaypal Mirdha, former chairman of the Rajasthan Scheduled Caste Commission Khiladi Lal Bairava, and former MLAs Alok Beniwal and MLA Ramnarayan Kisan were among those who joined the BJP.

The induction of the leaders into the BJP was facilitated by Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma and state BJP president CP Joshi. It is a second major jolt to the Congress within a few days as former minister Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya recently joined the BJP which fielded him from Basnwara in the Lok Sabha elections.

Meanwhile, reacting to the exodus of leaders, former CM Ashok Gehlot said, "The departing leaders had been nurtured and entrusted with significant responsibilities by the Congress but they chose to leave during challenging times for the party."

He said party leaders should take inspiration from the Gandhi family. "Through Nyay Yatra, he (Rahul Gandhi) is creating public awareness against injustice, inflation, hatred and unemployment," Gehlot said.

ED arrests Lalu's close aide in 'illegal' sand mining case, seizes ₹2.3 crore cash

RAMASHANKAR @Patna

SLEUTHS of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) arrested a sand businessman Subhash Yadav, a close aide of RJD chief Lalu Prasad, in a money laundering case related to illegal mining, on Saturday.

Yadav's arrest came after the ED conducted a 14-hour search operation at six locations associated with him in and around the state capital on Saturday. The searches were conducted at Yadav's premises at Danapur and Maner in Patna (rural) and his office at upscale Boring Road locality in the capital.

The ED seized cash worth more than ₹2.3 crore and incriminating documents. Sources said searches were also carried out in Ranchi. After taking him into custody, the Central agency produced him before a judicial magistrate who remanded him in 14-day judicial custody at Beur Central Jail.

The ED's actions stem from a probe initiated under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) based on 20 FIRs registered by the Bihar Police against M/s Broadson Commodities Pvt Ltd (BCPL) whose director is Subhash Yadav.

The BCPL is accused of causing revenue losses to the state government by engaging in illegal sand mining without using e-challans. The company also faces charges of violating environmental regulations by indulging in large-scale illegal sand mining across the state.

20 FIRs registered

ED's actions stem from a probe initiated under the PMLA based on 20 FIRs registered by the Bihar Police against a company whose director is Subhash Yadav. The firm also faces charges of violating environmental regulations by indulging in large-scale illegal sand mining

A case has been registered under the PMLA. The probe has reportedly revealed that the company minted money worth ₹161 crore through illegal sale of sand.

Yadav is a key player in a syndicate, controlling the state's illegal sand mining trade through companies like BCPL. Subhash Yadav, who is a member of the RJD's national committee, had contested the Lok Sabha elections on an RJD ticket from Chatra in Jharkhand in 2019.

The RJD reacted sharply with party spokesperson Shakti Singh Yadav saying that action against Subhash Yadav was a part of BJP's conspiracy to demoralise the party leadership. "They (BJP) are afraid of us after the grand success of 'Jan Vishwas Maharally' organised at Gandhi Maidan on March 3," he told the media.

He alleged the BJP was trying to threaten people close to the RJD chief Lalu Prasad through Central agencies like CBI and ED. "But that will not serve the purpose," he added. JD(U), however, defended ED's action and said that the law was taking its course. "The probe agencies are doing their work," JD(U) state president Umesh Kushwaha said.

Last year, the ED arrested Bihar MLC and JD(U) leader Radha Charan Sah, his son Kanhaiya Prasad and directors of Broadsons Commodities Mithilesh Kumar Singh, Baban Singh and Surendra Kumar Jindal and they are currently lodged in jail under judicial custody.

The agency had filed a chargesheet against them before a Patna special PMLA court in November 2023.

The alleged sand trade is controlled by a syndicate that invested funds in the said company and the syndicate earns profit by illegally selling sand, which is nothing but proceeds of crime, according to the ED.

After mother fails to repay, loan sharks abduct minor for 14 days in Jharkhand

MUKESH RANJAN @Ranchi

A minor boy was held hostage for 14 days by a microfinance company after his mother failed to repay the loan taken from it.

On being informed, the local police rescued the minor after lodging an FIR against two named and other unknown accused persons.

According to police, the branch manager of the microfinance company, Nigam Yadav, has been arrested while a hunt is on for the other named accused Umashankar Tiwari and others involved in the case.

Garhwa SP Deepak Kumar Pandey said that a complaint was filed by Santosh Ram's wife at Bhawnathpur police station on the basis of which, an FIR was lodged in this regard.

The minor's statement has also been recorded before a magistrate under Section 164 of IPC during which the matter was found to be true, he added. The boy has also recorded his statement before the Child Welfare Committee (CWC), which has initiated a separate probe. However, the SP refused to divulge any further information.

As per the woman, she had taken ₹40,000 as loan from the microfinance company. While she had repaid ₹32,000, a sum of ₹18,000 was due.

"Fourteen days ago, the branch manager and others came to my home for recovery. As I was away, they took my minor son to the branch at Henho Mode in Shribanshidhar Nagar and held him hostage for nearly two weeks. When I enquired about my son, they warned me not to approach the police or else his kidney and eyes would be removed and sold," stated the FIR.

Initially, the petrified woman did not inform the police, but after 14 days she lost patience and lodged a police complaint. The police swung into action and rescued her son.

The boy told the police that the accused used to make him clean the bottles and the place after having liquor besides other works.

Victim's statement recorded

The minor's statement has also been recorded before a magistrate under Section 164 of IPC during which the matter was found to be true, he added. The boy has also recorded his statement before the Child Welfare Committee (CWC), which has initiated a separate probe. However, the senior officer refused to divulge any further information.

HP Cong crisis: Father of rebel MLA booked

HARPREET BAJWA @Chandigarh

THE Himachal Pradesh Police on Sunday registered a case against an independent MLA and the father of a Congress rebel and others over "electoral offences" and bribery related to the Rajya Sabha polls in which six party MLAs voted for the BJP candidate from the state.

The case against Hamirpur's independent MLA Ashish Sharma and Gagret's now disqualified MLA Chetanya Sharma's father and others was registered on the basis of a complaint lodged by Congress MLAs Sanjay Avasthi and Bhuvneshwar Gaur.

Ashish and Chetanya are among the nine MLAs, including six Congress rebels and three independents, who voted in favour of the BJP nominee Harsh Mahajan in the recently held Rajya Sabha polls.

Chirag silent on Bihar Grand Alliance, says awaiting seat-sharing within NDA

RAMASHANKAR @Patna

SCOTCHING speculation about the possibility of him joining the grand alliance before the Lok Sabha elections, Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) chief **Chirag Paswan** on Sunday said that the seat-sharing arrangement among constituents of the NDA in Bihar would be announced soon.

In response to a media query, Paswan said, "A section of the media claims that I am unhappy with the number of seats offered to my party in the NDA. It is just a matter of time before the announcement on seat-sharing is made."

"I am more concerned about Bihar and its people," he remarked. When asked about the Grand Alliance's offer of eight seats to him in Bihar and two in Uttar Pradesh, Paswan did not reply and left the venue.

A section of the media claims that I am unhappy with the number of seats offered to my party in the NDA. It is just a matter of time before announcement on seat-sharing is made.

Chirag Paswan, Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) chief

Earlier, while addressing 'Jan-Ashirwad Mahasabha' at Sahebganj under Vaishali Lok Sabha constituency Paswan said, "I have no lust for power; I am only committed to the cause of the state and its people," he said. While indirectly attacking his uncle, union minister Pashupati Kumar Paras, Paswan said the people engineered a split in his house, family and party, but he could not be cowed down. He also blamed Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for the state's backwardness despite remaining in power for all these years.

He also asserted that every alliance wanted him on board as people were impressed by his 'Bihar First Bihari First' vision, which aimed to make Bihar a developed state by providing the best facilities to the people. Meanwhile, the Hajipur seat continues to be a bone of contention between Chirag and Paras, who is the chief of Rashtriya Lok Janshakti Party (RLJP).

GLOBAL WEATHER

LR: Light Rain • WI: Windy • HR: Heavy Rain • SN: Snow • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

Beijing	16	0	SNY	Los Angeles	20	11	SNY
Colombo	31	23	SNY	Melbourne	36	20	SNY
Dhaka	32	17	SNY	Moscow	1	-4	LC
Dubai	27	17	WI	New York	11	3	WI
Houston	23	12	SNY	Singapore	32	24	SNY
Istanbul	16	9	SNY	Toronto	8	1	SNY
London	11	6	LR	Washington	13	5	WI

US SHIP EN ROUTE TO GAZA TO BUILD PIER

Officials say it will be weeks before port becomes operational; sea corridor is backed by many including EU and UAE

'Russian shelling kills 3 in east Ukraine'

KYIV

RUSSIAN SHELLING of towns in eastern Ukraine killed three people Sunday while a Moscow strike on a residential building in the town of Myrnograd wounded a dozen, Kyiv said. Ukraine also said Moscow launched missile attacks on the northeastern Kharkiv region and sent attack drones across the centre and south of the country. Russia, meanwhile, said one woman was killed in Ukrainian shelling of a border village.

Moscow's invasion of Ukraine has dragged on for more than two years, with intense fighting in the east and regular attacks far from the frontline. Three people died as a result of today's shelling in the Donetsk region," the head of the embattled region Vadym Filashkin said on social media. He said rescuers pulled out two bodies "from under the rubble of a house" in the town of Dobropillya, which he said Russia attacked with Iranian-made Shahed drones at night.

A 66-year-old man was also killed in the frontline town of Chasiv Yar, Filashkin said. Further south, a Russian night-time strike on the east Ukrainian town of Myrnograd wounded a dozen people, Kyiv said. "In Myrnograd, the number of victims of the missile attack has increased to 12 people," Filashkin said. Myrnograd is a town in the Donetsk region around 40 kilometres (25 miles) from the frontline with Russian forces. AFP

KYIV VOWS 'NEVER' TO SURRENDER TO RUSSIA

KYIV: Ukraine on Sunday slammed Pope Francis's call to negotiate with Russia two years into its invasion, vowing "never" to surrender after pontiff said Kyiv should "have courage to raise white flag". The Catholic leader had fuelled anger in Kyiv after saying in an interview that Ukraine should negotiate with Russia, which has seized large swathes of its territory during the war.

GAZA

A US Army vessel carrying equipment for building a temporary pier in Gaza was on its way to the Mediterranean on Sunday, three days after US President Joe Biden announced plans to ramp up aid deliveries by sea to the besieged enclave where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been going hungry. The opening of the sea corridor, along with airdrops by the US, Jordan and others, showed increasing alarm over Gaza's humanitarian crisis and a new willingness to bypass Israeli control over land shipments. Israel said it welcomed the sea deliveries and would inspect Gaza-bound cargo before it leaves a staging area in nearby Cyprus. The daily number of aid trucks entering Gaza by land over the past five months has been far below the 500 that entered before the war because of Israeli restrictions and security issues.

The Civil Defense Department said at least nine Palestinians, including children, were killed in an Israeli airstrike on a house in Gaza City on Saturday. Footage shared by the civil defense showed first responders pulling out the dead and injured trapped in the collapsed house. One rescuer was seen holding a dead infant, before placing the limp body on a sofa amid the wreckage. Elsewhere, the bodies of 13 people, including women and children, were taken to the main hospital in the central town of Deir al-Balah on Sunday, according to an Associated Press journalist. Relatives said the 13 were killed by Israeli artillery fire toward a large tent camp for displaced Palestinians in the coastal area east of the southern city of Khan Younis. Israel rarely comments on specific incidents during the war. It has held that Hamas is responsible for civilian casualties because the militant group operates from within civilian areas. Meanwhile, US efforts got under way to set up the temporary pier in Gaza for the sea deliveries. US Central Command said a first US Army vessel, the General Frank S. Besson, left a base in Virginia on Saturday and was on its way to the Eastern Mediterranean with equipment for pier construction. United States officials said it will likely be weeks before the pier is operational.

The sea corridor is backed by the EU together with the United States, the United Arab Emirates and other countries. AP

Israel-Hamas war rages in besieged Gaza on eve of Ramadan

GAZA: Deadly fighting raged on in Gaza on Sunday, with no truce in sight on the eve of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Weeks of talks involving US, Qatari and Egyptian mediators have aimed for a six-week truce and the release of many of the about 100 hostages Hamas is still holding in return for Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails, with no result so far. Inside Gaza, displaced Palestinians were lining up at a truck carrying scarce drinking water, which they filled into jerry cans and plastic containers. The Israeli military said its troops had killed 13 militants in air strikes and with tank and sniper fire in central Gaza over the past day.

A Palestinian boy inspecting the damage to a building that was hit in an Israeli strike in Rafah on Sunday | AFP

WAR WATCH

ISRAEL-GAZA: DAY 154

ISRAEL VISA FREEZE ON AID WORKERS COMPOUNDS GAZA WOES

Jerusalem: Along with cumbersome border checks and relentless Israeli bombardment, the humanitarian response in war-ravaged Gaza faces a new challenge: a de facto freeze on visas for many international aid workers. Israeli authorities have stopped issuing new visas or renewing old ones for foreign employees of international NGOs, most of whom occupy senior positions, according to three senior humanitarian officials and a body representing more than 80 groups. As of Thursday, 57 aid workers' visas had expired since the war broke out on October 7, while 42 more "will expire in the coming weeks", said Faris Arouri, director of Association of International Development Agencies.

GAZA TOLL SO FAR 31,045

'Netanyahu 'hurting Israel more than helping'

WILMINGTON

US PRESIDENT Joe Biden said on Saturday that he believes Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is 'hurting Israel more than helping Israel' in how he is approaching its war against Hamas in Gaza.

The US leader expressed support for Israel's right to pursue Hamas after the October 7 attack, but said of Netanyahu that 'he must pay more attention to the innocent lives being lost as a consequence of the actions taken.' Biden has for months warned that Israel risks losing international support over mounting civilian casualties in Gaza, and the latest remarks in an interview with MSNBC's Jonathan Capehart pointed to the increasingly strained relationship between the two leaders.

Biden said a potential Israeli invasion of the Gaza city of Rafah, where more than 1.3 million Palestinians are sheltering, is 'a red line' for him, but said he would not cut off weapons like the Iron Dome missile interceptors which protect the Israeli civilian populace from rocket attacks in the region. "It is a red line," he said, when asked about Rafah, "but I'm never going to leave Israel. The defense of Israel is still critical, so there's no red line I'm going to cut off all weapons so they don't have the Iron Dome to protect them." Biden said he was willing to make his case directly to the Israeli Knesset, its parliament, including by making another trip to the country. AP

WALKING THE RAMP WITH ELAN

Contestants walk the ramp during the grand finale of the 71st Miss World pageant at the Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai on Saturday. Czech Republic's Krystyna Pyszková won the title | PTI

Whereabouts of 300 missing students in Nigeria still unknown

KURIGA

RASHIDAT Hamza is in despair. All but one of her six children are among the nearly 300 students abducted from their school in Nigeria's northwest, riddled with Islamic extremists and armed gangs. It has been over two days after her children went to school in the remote town of Kuriga in Kaduna state only to be kidnapped by gunmen. Authorities said at least 100 children aged 12 or younger were among the abductees in the state known for violent killings, lawlessness and dangerous roads where people get regularly snatched. "We don't know what to do, but we believe in God," Hamza told The Associated Press during a visit to the town.

The mass kidnapping in Kuriga was the third in northern Nigeria since last week; a group of gunmen abducted 15 children from a school in another northwestern state, Sokoto, before dawn on Saturday, and a few days earlier 200 people, mostly women and children displaced by conflict, were kidnapped in northeastern Borno State. The kidnappings are a stark reminder of the security crisis plaguing Africa's most populous country. No group claimed responsibility for any of the recent abductions. But Islamic extremists waging an insurgency in the northeast are suspected of carrying out the kidnapping in Borno. Locals blame the school abductions on herders who are in conflict with the settled communities. It's not the first time for a student kidnapping in Nigeria to shock the world. In 2014, Islamic extremists abducted more than 200 schoolgirls from Borno's Chibok, sparking the global #BringBackOurGirls social media campaign. A decade later, at least 1,400 Nigerian students have so far been abducted from their schools in similar circumstances. Some are still held captive, including nearly 100 of the Chibok girls.

Recalling Thursday's kidnapping, Nura Ahmad, a teacher, told the AP that students were just settling into their classrooms at the government primary and secondary school when gunmen 'came in dozens, riding on bikes and shooting sporadically.' The LEA Primary and Secondary School, one of the few educational facilities in this area, sits by the road just at the entrance of the town, tucked in the middle of forests and savannah. "They surrounded the school and blocked all passages to prevent help from coming before kidnapping the children in less than five minutes," Ahmad said. AP

THE ALL-NEW TNIE THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS APP

SCAN THE QR CODE TO DOWNLOAD THE APP

Google Play App Store

STAY UP-TO-DATE WITH THE LATEST NEWS

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Divakar M, R/o B105, Chartered Humming Bird Apartment, Kanakapura Main Road, Thalaghattapura, Bengaluru- 560062.

That my Registered Absolute Sale deed Document Papers has been lost.

The above said Document bearing No. BSK-1-04978-2013-14 (CD NO BSKD 227), Dated on 29.07.2013, AMITY HARMONY Apartment, Block 'A', Flat No.301, Chennasandra, Dwaraka nagara, RR Nagara, Bangalore-560098

That my registered Police complaint, lost report No. 0938566/2024. If any body finds the above said documents or is in possession, Please handover the same to the above said address or Contact Phone No: 9845518530

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby notified to General Public that we Smt. Thippamma .D W/o. Sri. Shivarajkumar .G, are intending to purchase the below mentioned Schedule Property, for which, Smt. Yashoda Ratnam .V W/o. Late Venkataratnam.V is the Absolute Owner, having right, title and possession of the Schedule Property. If anybody has/have any sort of dispute, objections or claims of whatsoever nature in respect of the said Schedule Property, he/they shall contact the below mentioned person, within 15 (Fifteen) days from this date, together with all the related documents. Or else, it is hereby notified that we will be having right to conclude the transaction in respect of the Schedule Property.

DETAILS OF SCHEDULE PROPERTY

Property bearing Khatha No: 281/4, Hulimavu Village Gramtana House List No:20, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, bounded by :- Towards **East** : Other's property; Towards **West** : Road, Towards **North** : Other's property, Towards **South** : Remaining portion property in the very same Number;

All that piece and parcel of the property situated right in between the above said boundaries, measuring **East to West : 30-0 Feet**; and **North-South: 31-0 Feet**; Site having above measurement and with a 2 Floor Building constructed thereon in ½ Squares with R.C.C Roof and A.C. Sheet Roof House therein.

(Thippamma.D)

Bengaluru Mobile : 7353949009
Date:09.03.2024 7259593037

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that our client is desirous of purchasing Apartment No.F-24, 2nd Floor, 'Palace Orchard Apartments', No.52, 9th Main Road, Rajmahal Vilas Extension, Bangalore 560080 morefully described in the Schedule hereunder from Dr.H.D.Ranganath and others ("Owners") and has entered into an Agreement for Sale dated 28.11.2023 with them.

Any person/s asserting any right, title, interest or claim including by way of inheritance, share, sale, mortgage, transfer, lease, tenancy, lien, charge, trust, maintenance, easement, gift, devise, bequest, exchange, pre-emption, possession or encumbrance or otherwise in the Schedule Property or any part thereof or having any kind of claims thereon or having any kind of claim against the documents of title or objecting to such sale by the Owners in favour of our client, shall lodge their objection/s in writing with the undersigned within **15 days** from the date of issuance of this notice with all documentary proof on which they base/ assert their rights over the Schedule Property or any part thereof, after which period our client shall proceed with the proposed purchase of the Schedule Property on the basis that there are no such claims whatsoever.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of Apartment bearing No.F-24, 2nd floor, 'Palace Orchard Apartments', situated at No.52, 9th Main Road, Rajmahal Vilas Extension, Bangalore, consisting of three bedrooms, hall and kitchen having a built up area of 1575 square feet, along with proportionate share in the common use areas such as passages, lobbies, lifts, staircases and other areas of common use with mosaic flooring along with proportionate undivided share of 1/64th, right, title and interest in the land and bounded on the:

East by: Flat No.21, West by: Flat No.25 in 'B' Block, North by: 9th Main Road, South by: Flat No.23

HARISH N.N. Advocate,
M/s Aaren Associates
301, Esteem Plaza, 356/20, 4th Main Road, Sadashivanagar, Bangalore-560080.
Mob: 9845450587
Email: aaaren@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

BEFORE THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I
4TH FLOOR, TELEPHONE HOUSE BUILDING, RAJ BHAVAN ROAD, BANGALORE 560001.
O. A. No. 650/2021

Between:
UNION BANK OF INDIA
Yelahanka New Town branch, Bangalore ...Applicant

And:
1. **M/s.SHIVA ENTERPRISES**
2. **Mr.N.SANTOSH KUMAR**
3. **Mrs.K.SUMATHI** ...Defendants

SUMMONS ISSUED UNDER RULE 23(VIII) OF THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES 1993 BY WAY OF SUBSTITED SERVICE:

To:
Defendants:
1. **M/s. SHIVA ENTERPRISES**
No.26/2, 2nd Floor, Somashettyhalli, Chikkabanavara Post, Bangalore-560090
Represented by its sole Proprietor Mr.N.Santosh Kumar, S/o.Subba Reddy
2. **Mr.N.SANTOSH KUMAR,** Son of Subba Reddy, Aged about 28 Years, Residing at No.38, Somashetty halli, Chikkabanavara Post, Bangalore - 560090.
3. **Mrs.K.SUMATHI,** Wife of N.Santosh kumar, Aged about 29 Years, Residing at No.38, Somashetty halli, Chikkabanavara Post, Bangalore - 560090.

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted an application under section 19, of the Recovery of Debts and Bankruptcy Act 1993, against you for recovery of sum **Rs.52,98,089/- (Rupees Fifty Two Lakhs Ninety Eight thousand Eighty Nine only)** together with current and future interest, costs and other reliefs.

You are hereby summoned to appear before this Tribunal in person or through an Advocate or dully authorised agent duly instructed to show cause within 15 days from the date of publication or **on 08-07-2024 at 10:30 a.m.** as to why reliefs prayed for should not be granted. Take notice that in default of your appearance the application will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal on this the **19th day of February 2024.**

Sd/- Registrar,
Debt Recovery Tribunal- I Bangalore

PUBLIC NOTICE

Loss of document

It is for the information that the original of Sale Agreement dated July 25, 1987, by M/s. Builders Associates and K. Rakesh Muthanna; and the Sale Deed dated April 2, 1988 registered as Document No. 22/1988-89, Book 1, Volume 2759, Pages 144-152, in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Bangalore South Taluk, by M/s. Tharangini Industries and K. Rakesh Muthanna regarding Flat bearing No. A-34 in the third floor, in Block II, property bearing Survey No. 151/1, Khata No. 240/A/101/P of H.A. Sanitary Board Area, Kodihalli Village, South Taluk, Bangalore - 560 017, has been lost. In this regard, a lost report has been registered on the E-lost report application and acknowledgement received on January 24, 2024. Name of owner **Mr. Rakesh Muthana** also known as K. Rakesh Muthanna, Residence at No. 3/147 Sargam, Road No 9, Wadala Mumbai - 400 031. Contact No. 9820152659.

TUNGABHADRA BOARD: TB DAM
e-Procurement Short Term Tender Notice IFB Nos.132/2023-24 Dt. 31.01.2024,(3rd Call), 110/2023-24 Dt. 15.07.2023 (4th Call),88/2023-24 Dt.12.06.2023 (4th Call) & 92/2023-24 Dt.12.06.2023 (4th Call)

Tender for **04 Nos. of Works** in respect of HW & HLC Division, TB Dam under 'Works' & 'Collection of Fee' categories are re-invited through 'e-Procurement'.

Bid Document downloading Start Date & Time:	11.03.2024 at 11:00 AM
Bid Document downloading End Date & Time :	18.03.2024 at 3:00 PM
Bid Submission End Date & Time :	18.03.2024 at 5:30 PM
Date of opening of PQ Stage:	18.03.2024 at 6.00 PM
Date of opening of Commercial Stage: (IFB No.132 & 110)	20.03.2024 at 11:00 AM
Date of opening of Commercial Stage*: (IFB No.88 & 92,)	20.03.2024 at 11:00 AM
Date of opening of TQ Stage (IFB No.88 & 92)	20.03.2024 at 3:00 PM

Further details can be seen @ https://tender.apeprocurement.gov.in
* Commencement Of Reverse Tendering
Ph: 08394-259114
Fax: 08394-259167

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer, I.B, TB Board, TB Dam

FEDBANK FINANCIAL SERVICES LTD. AUCTION NOTICE

This is to inform the public at large, that FEDBANK FINANCIAL SERVICES LTD., has decided to conduct Auction of Gold ornaments belonging to accounts (mentioned below) which have become overdue or which have defaults or margin breach of customers. The Auction would be held at respective Branches specified below on **Friday 22-03-2024 between 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m.** This would continue till the auction process is over.

Anekal 080-27830505 **FEDGL0088**0004249, 0004267 **Arakalgud** 08175-220780 **FEDGL0036**0010972, 0010973, 0010977, 0010983, 0010993, 0010994, 0010995, 0011007, 0011010, 0011016, 0011021, 0011043, 0011044, 0011045, 0011049, 0011053, 0011055, 0011073, 0011079, 0011080, 0011082, 0011083, 0011084, 0011089, 0011092, 0011094, 0011097, 0011707, 0012500 **Arasikere** 08174-299941 **FEDGL0414**0002683, 0002716, 0002723, 0003798, 0004310, 0004327, 0004054, 0004309 **B H Road** 8162277793 **FEDGL0103**0011044, 0011154, 0011202, 0011207, 0011237, 0013973 **BASAVESHWARA NAGAR** 080 41900282 **FEDGL0011**0010818, 0010824, 0010841, 0010854, 0010870, 0010871, 0012108, 0012117 **BELGAUM** 0831 4201487 **FEDGL0136**0005221, 0005230, 0005231, 0005241, 0005242, 0005258, 0005261, 0005262, 0005268, 0005269, 0005270, 0005277, 0005284, 0005285, 0006146, 0006182, 0005247, 0006640, 0006692 **BELUR** 08177 222100 **FEDGL0159**0009631, 0009633, 0009635, 0009638, 0009639, 0009645, 0009661, 0009677, 0009689, 0009693, 0009695, 0009708, 0009711, 0009714, 0009718, 0009725, 0009730, 0010761 **BOMMANAHALLI** 080 41500417 **FEDGL0014**0006943, 0007259, 0007547, 0007839 **BTM LAYOUT** 080-41312231 **FEDGL0003**0005965, 0005968, 0005969, 0005977, 0005978, 0005979, 0005993, 0005995, 0005996, 0006013, 0006014, 0006018, 0006020, **FEDBD0003**0000030 **BYADGI** 8375229022 **FEDGL0051**0010028, 0010042, 0010051, 0010061, 0010070, 0010071, 0010086, 0010088, 0010103, 0010105, 0010109, 0010110, 0010116, 0010118, 0010120, 0010122 **Caltex Circle** 8162277972 **FEDGL0102**0010246, 0010250, 0010253, 0010258, 0010259, 0010266, 0010282, 0010283, 0010299, 0010303, 0010308, 0010312, 0010313, 0010317, 0010322, 0010328, 0010331, 0010352, 0010364, 0010365, 0010375, 0010377, 0010389, 0013420, 0013418 **Car Street Bellary** 8392276005 **FEDGL0092**0003596, 0003619, 0003621, 0003622, 0003624, 0003625, 0003642, 0003644, 0003648, 0003653, 0003660, 0004263, 0004279, 0004586, 0004558 **CHANNAPATNA** 080 27256046 **FEDGL0176**0018463, 0018483, 0018493, 0018519, 0018525, 0018545, 0019600, 0019616, 0019639, 0020051, 0020079, 0020082 **CHENRAYAPATNA** 08176 252477 **FEDGL0158**0020888, 0020958, 0020961, 0020962, 0020972, 0020994, 0021004, 0021005, 0021016, 0021017, 0021028, 0022598 **CHIKKAMAGALUR** 08262 228286 **FEDGL0021**0007152, 0007167, 0007173, 0007176, 0007179, 0007198, 0007205, 0007876, 0008204 **DAVANGERE** 08192-252111 **FEDGL0229**0009025, 0009039, 0009040, 0009314, 0009652 **dharwad** 0836 -2970229 **FEDGL0233**0005412, 0005419, 0005427, 0005430, 0005431, 0005433, 0005439 **Gadag** 08372-200075 **FEDGL0420**0002825, 0002833, 0002854, 0002895, 0002896, 0002924, 0003514, 0004222, 0004230 **Gangavathi** 8533234018 **FEDGL0094**0004595, 0004601, 0004603, 0004607, 0004619, 0004622, 0004624, 0004630, 0004631, 0004635, 0005227, 0005713 **Gubbi** 8131222850 **FEDGL0046**0011599, 0011614, 0011626, 0011637, 0011641, 0011649, 0011650, 0011653, 0011660, 0011666, 0011676, 0011678, 0011683, 0011692, 0011693, 0011698, 0011699, 0011700, 0011702, 0011704, 0011714, 0011736, 0011741, 0011744, 0011757, 0011760, 0011774, 0014148 **Gundalpete** 08229-295128 **FEDGL0383**0002740, 0002764, 0002765, 0002767, 0002783, 0002811, 0002820, 0003775 **H D Kote** 08228-297033 **FEDGL0058**0008338, 0008364, 0008387, 0008405, 0009995, 0010014, 0009959, 0010013 **Hagaribommanhalli** 08397-239003 **FEDGL0100**0008658, 0008690, 0008696, 0008698, 0008707, 0008720, 0008733, 0008749, 0008752, 0008764, 0008773, 0010965, 0010979 **HANSUR** 08222 250114 **FEDGL0162**0016165, 0016169, 0016186, 0016197, 0016201, 0016202, 0017130, 0017544, 0017554, 0017574, 0017575, 0017576, 0017583 **Harappanahalli** 8398281429 **FEDGL0104**0008686, 0008708 **HARIHAR** 08192-242865 **FEDGL0022**0013563, 0013577, 0013595, 0013601, 0013602, 0013604, 0013623, 0013628, 0014848, **FEDBD0022**0000011 **HASSAN MARKET** 08172 235324 **FEDGL0157**0011906, 0011919, 0011938, 0011951, 0011955, 0011969, 0011972, 0011990, 0011993, 0011995, 0012000, 0012690 **HAVERI** 8375232810 **FEDGL0181**0009968, 0009969, 0009978, 0009984, 0009998, 0010007, 0010031, 0010032, 0010043, 0010997 **HENNUR** 080-41979377 **FEDGL0015**0004428, 0004440, 0004441, 0004442, 0004460, 0005025, 0004789 **Holenarsipura** 08175-273733 **FEDGL0059**0019528, 0019535, 0019544, 0019550, 0019588, 0019605, 0019606, 0019631, 0019646, 0019652, 0019656, 0019663, 0019670, 0019672, 0019692, 0019694, 0019696, 0019701, 0019705, 0019714, 0019729, 0019730, 0019731 **HOSA ROAD** 080-25744811 **FEDGL0002**0011784, 0013335 **Hosadurga** 8199200023 **FEDGL0412**0003271, 0003301, 0003321, 0003337, 0003353, 0003363, 0003365, 0003368, 0004665 **Hospet** 08394-226899 **FEDGL0099**0006923, 0006935, 0006936, 0006947, 0006972, 0006981, 0006989, 0006999, 0007000, 0007004, 0007007, 0007020, 0007592, 0007597, 0008086, 0008088, 0008089, 0008116, 0008139, 0008140, 0008141, 0008620, **FEDBD0099**0000094 **JEEVAN BHEEMA NAGAR** 080 41900283 **FEDGL0019**0003175, 0003197, 0003199, 0003200, 0003210, 0003216, 0003622 **K R NAGAR** 08223 262045 **FEDGL0161**0011221, 0011233, 0011235, 0011258, 0011259, 0011278, 0011281, 0011282, 0011289, 0011292, 0011300, 0011302, 0011322, 0012413 **K R Pete** 08230-262886 **FEDGL0063**0007138, 0007165, 0007170, 0007171, 0007189, 0007192, 0007201, 0007208, 0007210, 0007224, 0007232, 0007237, 0007238, 0008194, 0008590 **K R PURAM** 080 25610669 **FEDGL0012**0012179, 0012180, 0012181, 0013195, 0013654, 0013104, 0013578 **K R ROAD** 8192272223 **FEDGL0037**0005410, 0005440, 0005456, 0005463, 0005466, 0005467 **Kadur** 08267-200280 **FEDGL0487**0002217, 0002245, 0002282, 0002293, 0002313, 0002314, 0003732, 0003731 **KAMMANAHALLI** 080 40926572 **FEDGL0005**0004223, 0004263, 0004264, 0004268 **Kampli** 08394-250822 **FEDGL0095**0006914, 0006930, 0006951, 0006953, 0006976, 0006980, 0006991, 0006997, 0008526, 0008525 **Kappogal Road Bellary** 08392-255005 **FEDGL0093**0003862, 0003864, 0003869, 0003900, 0003910, 0003928 **KOPIKAR ROAD** 8362362444 **FEDGL0155**0007345, 0007347, 0007348, 0007352, 0007370, 0007392, 0007402 **Koppal** 8539200090 **FEDGL0403**0001746, 0001747, 0001749, 0001755, 0001795, 0002596, 0002919, 0002117, 0002837, 0002861, 0002890, 0003438 **Kudligi** 08391-299920 **FEDGL0404**0003152, 0003167, 0003168, 0003187, 0003198, 0003199, 0003224, 0003234, 0003241, 0003245, 0003247, 0003249, 0003254, 0003259, 0003260, 0003263, 0003275, 0003278, 0003982, 0003997, 0004875, 0005663, 0005703, **FEDBD0404**0000179 **KUnigal** 08162-220155 **FEDGL0121**0007580, 0007584, 0007596, 0007606, 0007620, 0007624, 0007648, 0007668, 0007670, 0007672, 0007673, 0007678, 0007685, 0007696, 0007706, 0008448, 0008487, 0008539, 0010208, 0010117, 0010178, 0010202, 0009934, 0010169, 0010177 **Laxmeshwara** 8487200005 **FEDGL0407**0001362, 0001980, 0002012 **Madhugiri** 8137200547 **FEDGL0393**0004199, 0004202, 0004220, 0004224, 0004229, 0004235, 0004247, 0004250, 0004262, 0004267, 0004278, 0004286, 0004287, 0004289, 0004299, 0004319, 0004320, 0004327, 0004328, 0004332, 0004337, 0004338, 0004347, 0004350, 0004354, 0004366, 0007314, 0007429, 0006006, 0007235, 0007257 **Malavalli** 08321-244588 **FEDGL0365**0004223, 0004233, 0004277, 0004285, 0004288, 0004290, 0004291, 0004300, 0004304, 0004306 **Malebennur** 08192-299566 **FEDGL0062**0010501, 0010510, 0010532, 0010534, 0011101, 0011688, 0011699, 0012082, 0012101 **MANDYA** 08232 239585 **FEDGL0163**0007656, 0007689, 0007723, 0007725 **Mundargi** 08371-295011 **FEDGL0064**0007430, 0007434, 0007440, 0007470, 0007471, 0007501, 0007515, 0007516, 0008816, 0008872, 0009485 **Nagarbhavi** 8023356022 **FEDGL0031**0005207, 0005245 **NANJANGODE** 08221 223326 **FEDGL0160**0012748, 0012758, 0012802, 0012804, 0012827, 0012834, 0012840, 0012854, 0012856, 0012858, 0012862, 0012878, 0012883 **Nelamangala** 08029911005 **FEDGL0392**0001883, 0001884, 0001885, 0001886, 0001897, 0002786 **Pavagada** 08136-295608 **FEDGL0377**0006339, 0006340, 0006346, 0006368, 0006378, 0006379, 0006383, 0006384, 0006389, 0006404, 0006431, 0006432, 0006433, 0006434, 0006444, 0006453, 0006459, 0006464, 0006466, 0006473, 0006492, 0006496, 0006497, 0006506, 0006510, 0006512, 0006513, 0006514, 0006515, 0006516, 0006518, 0006524, 0006531, 0006533, 0008366 **Periapatna** 08223-297589 **FEDGL0044**0007522, 0007532, 0007543, 0007564, 0007628, 0007634, 0007647, 0007648, 0009574, 0009639, 0009573, 0009638 **RAJAJI NAGAR** 080 41902910 **FEDGL0004**0004054, 0004055, 0004056, 0004057, 0004058 **Ramamurthy Nagar** 8041225616 **FEDGL0035**0002296 **RAMANAGARA** 080 27275627 **FEDGL0180**0021291, 0021305, 0021316, 0021333, 0021334, 0021337, 0021351, 0021380, 0021383, 0021424, 0021425, 0021436, 0021442, 0021452, 0021463, 0021467, 0022373, 0022405, 0023431, 0023501, 0024379, 0024310, 0023905, 0024892, **FEDDS0180**0000122 **RAMASWAMY CIRCLE** 8214253754 **FEDGL0173**0006843, 0006844, 0006856, 0007340, 0007343 **RANEBENNUR** 08373 - 297397 **FEDGL0232**0009989, 0009994, 0009999, 0010012, 0010038, 0010043, 0010049, 0010054, 0010056, 0010057, 0010058, 0010071, 0011470, 0011514 **SHIMOGA** 081 23115765 **FEDGL0183**0010118, 0010131, 0010133, 0010148, 0010153 **Sindhanur** 08535-200110,8880890891 **FEDGL0461**0001834, 0001840, 0001842, 0001864, 0001866, 0001867, 0001872, 0001876, 0001879, 0003255 **Sira** 08135-295620 **FEDGL0376**0006099, 0006111, 0006116, 0006118, 0006130, 0006131, 0006135, 0006144, 0006145, 0006154, 0006162, 0006173, 0006200, 0006213, 0006217, 0006226, 0006235, 0006244, 0006250, 0006261, 0006264, 0006265, 0007254, 0008325, 0009422 **SIRSI** 08384-223365 **FEDGL0193**0006919, 0006920, 0006921, 0006925, 0006935, 0006941, 0006946, 0006947, 0006952, 0006953, 0006955, 0006957, 0006960, 0006962, 0006963 **Srinivasa Nagar** 080-26693369 **FEDGL0089**0003677, 0003709 **SULTHANPLYA** 080 41636281 **FEDGL0013**0004982, 0005292, 0005711, 0005740, 0005741, 0006212, 0006213 **Tarikere** 08261-200233 **FEDGL0415**0002298, 0002313, 0002330, 0002351, 0002353, 0002354, 0002357, 0002365, 0003568 **Tiptur** 8134252402 **FEDGL0047**0008237, 0008258, 0008277, 0008279, 0008291, 0008295, 0008305, 0008306, 0008309, 0008723, 0009240 **Turuvekere** 8139295735 **FEDGL0386**0003963, 0003966, 0003982, 0003983, 0004003, 0004004, 0004016, 0004024, 0004026, 0004037, 0004039, 0004048, 0004054, 0004064, 0004065, 0004067 **Yeshwantpur** 8041225684 **FEDGL0034**0004414, 0004436, 0004469, 0004478, 0004486

Change in Venue or Date, if any will be displayed on our Website www.fedfina.com. All bidders participating will be intimated subsequently with respect to acceptance or rejection of bids submitted by them. Customer who want to release their ornaments shall visit at the base branch wherein the ornaments were pledged by the customer or contact at the number mentioned above on/or before 21-03-2024 subject to the terms and condition applicable.

Auction will be conducted at respective branches, in case the auction does not get completed on the given date due to any reasons, the auction in respect thereto shall be conducted on subsequent working days at district level branch after displaying the details on our Website. No further communication shall be issued in this regard.

Dated : 11-03-2024
Place : Karnataka

For, sd/- Authorised Signatory
Fedbank Financial Services Ltd.,

All the news. In just a click. Log to www.newindianexpress.com

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

/thenewindianexpress @newindianexpress • The New Indian Express

Google Play App Store

Cardholders' data cannot be shared without their consent

Amending its master directions for credit and debit cards, the RBI has mandated that cardholders be provided an option to modify the billing cycle of credit card

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Bengaluru

FROM now on, card issuers cannot share card data including transaction data of the cardholders with the outsourcing partners without explicit consent from the cardholder. Earlier there were guidelines on the same, but the Reserve Bank of India has now amended the Master Direction on Credit Card and Debit Cards, advising card issuers to ensure that the storage and the ownership of card data remains with them.

It has also asked the card issuers to put in place an effective mechanism to monitor end use of funds. The move will help card holders as they can ensure that their card issuers do not share data without their consent.

The amended provisions have come into effect from March 07, 2024. The new rules stipulate that in case where the customers give explicit consent for sharing the information provided by them with other agencies, card issuers shall clearly state and explain to the customer the full meaning or implications of the disclosure clause.

The RBI has also released FAQs in which it says that card issuers are prohibited from issuing unsolicited credit cards and are required to seek prior and explicit consent from the customer before issuing a card. However, if the customer receives an unsolicited card, he/she should refrain from activating or providing consent for activation of the card through OTP or any other means.

If no consent is received for activating the card, the card-issuer is required to close the credit card account without any cost to the customer within seven working days from the date of seeking confirmation from the customer and shall also inform the customer that the credit card account has been closed, the central bank said.

It also added that card issuers should not levy interest on the unpaid taxes, levies or any other charges.

NEW CREDIT CARD RULES
In case a cardholder does not clear the total amount due within the payment due date, interest free credit period will be lost
The co-branding partner shall not advertise/ market the co-branded card as its own product
Card issuers are prohibited from issuing unsolicited credit cards
Card issuers need to inform the cardholders of the implications of paying only the minimum amount
Usage of a credit card beyond the sanctioned credit limit requires prior consent of the cardholder

Modify billing cycle date

Card issuers do not follow a standard billing cycle for all credit cards issued. In order to provide flexibility in this regard, the RBI said that the card holders should be provided with an option to choose any date as the starting or closing day of the billing cycle at least once.

Further, card-issuers may provide the option to modify the billing cycle through multiple channels such as helpline, dedicated e-mail-id, Interactive Voice Response (IVR), internet banking, mobile-application and any other modes.

To caution the cardholders about the pitfalls in paying only the minimum amount due, the amendment to the existing provisions of the Master Direction (MD) also says that card issuers should inform the cardholders of the implications of paying only 'the minimum amount due'. A legend/warning to the effect that 'Making only the minimum payment every month would result in the repayment stretching over months/years with consequential compounded interest payment on outstanding balance' shall be prominently displayed in all the billing statements.

The MITC (Most Important Terms and Conditions) shall specifically explain that the 'interest-free credit period' is suspended if any balance of the previous month's bill is outstanding, the new rules said. Card issuers can issue business credit cards to business entities/individuals for business expenses. The RBI clarified that the business credit cards may also be issued as charge cards, corporate credit cards or by linking a credit facility such as overdraft/cash credit provided for business purpose as per the terms and conditions stipulated for the facility concerned.

This comes after the banking regulator ordered restraining commercial transactions routed through intermediaries by a card network. Also, the Reserve Bank said it did not prescribe any requirement for insurance cover on debit or credit cards. However, in case a card issuer or a card payment network provides an insurance cover, complimentary or chargeable with the consent of the cardholder, the card-issuer shall ensure that the relevant nomination details are recorded by the insurance company and the availability of insurance is included, along with other information, in every statement.

Complaints against issuers?

Customers can approach the card issuer concerned for any redressal. However, if the issuer does not respond within 30 days or rejects the complaint, the customer can lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman, Reserve Bank through online at https://cms.rbi.org.in or physical complaint can be sent to RBI, Sector -17, Chandigarh.

MONEY MATTERS

IF YOU ARE AWARE OF THE RISKS, YOU CAN MANAGE THEM

FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE

RAJAS KELKAR
(The author is editor-in-chief at www.moneyminute.in)

SUCCESS in investing has nothing to do with your intelligence. You need the temperament to control the urges that get other people into trouble in investing. As share prices soar to new highs daily, your writer is reminded of Warren Buffett again. At such dizzy heights, there is a lot of risk lurking somewhere. Despite things going well for India's surging economy and stock markets, that is. As an investor, you are better off prepared. Knowledge is the only weapon that can prepare you for eventual risk events. If you are aware of the risks, you can manage them.

How to define risks

There are internal and external risks associated with your finances. Your temperament is an internal risk. If the opinions of others sway you, you are likely to make the same mistakes as them. You need to err on the side of knowledge. Get into a habit of reading up on things that people recommend. You can cross-check the information and make decisions based on your research. Then, there are many external factors. Financial markets go through cycles. Share prices do not move up in a straight line. If they are at their peak, there is a good chance that they may fall from there or stagnate at those levels. Putting a lot of money in the market can be risky at that time. Sebi recently cautioned mutual funds on risks in launching mid-cap and small-cap schemes when such stocks are trading at record-high prices.

Inflation plays a significant role in the value of money that you hold in the future. Try to learn more about the impact of persistent inflation on your money. You must read the inflation outlook published every two months by the Reserve Bank of India. While you can read a lot more about the significant picture factors like economic growth, consumer demand, government finances and policies, you can start tracking some lead indicators.

Stock market prices today reflect tomorrow's profits. If they fall for some reason, prospects for profits are not so great. Rising prices affect businesses, too. The moment you notice prices of essentials and other services are rising, you should take note. In a high-inflation environment, the profits of businesses get squeezed as they cannot pass on rising input costs to customers due to competition.

Understanding your ability to withstand risk is the next step. If you speak to any professional advisor, they will talk about your risk appetite before telling you about investing. It is usually a function of your ability to withstand losses. That comes from your confidence in your future income. If you believe there is a limited risk to your future income, you can withstand shocks and have a high-risk appetite. However, if your confidence is dodgy about your future earnings, you may struggle in a downturn if you take risks.

In most cases, Indian households put their surplus money into real estate and gold. According to the RBI data, only 4.7% of household assets are allocated to equity in India. It is four times higher in America. That shows that most Indian households have a low-risk appetite or need something tangible.

SOURAV ROY

Investing is for the long-term

A fundamental principle of mitigating risk is investing regularly and holding your investment long-term.

That applies mainly to equity assets that carry an immediate risk of loss. However, you need to ignore the noise about booking profits or losses. You must invest in equities long-term and benefit from the potential upside in capital gains. Mutual funds in India offer a systematic investment plan in various schemes that own multiple asset classes. You can minimize the risk factor in your investment by allocating your surplus money across large-cap, mid-cap and small-cap companies.

You can also use hybrid schemes to lower the risk to your portfolio. Your equity investment requires 12-15 years to create any meaningful wealth. Short-term investing in equities directly or indirectly is akin to trading.

MONEY-WISE

RETIRING EARLY NOT A FINANCIALLY SOUND OPTION

FINANCIAL ADVICE

PV SUBRAMANYAM
writes at www.subramoney.com and has authored the best seller 'Retire Rich - Invest ₹40 a day'

MOST people are urging you to be FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT so that you can retire early–FIRE as it is called. In fact, proponents of this aim to reach this far earlier, perhaps even in their 30s. This involves saving tons of money and making a lot of financial sacrifices. Even retiring in our 60s does not seem to be so easy, so should one take such stress?

There are many people I know who would continue to work till they are in their 70s, if their employers keep them. I have a cousin who is working – he is just past his 75th birthday. Most Indian men do not have a hobby and actually prefer being in office instead of being at home doing nothing. Do Retirement Calculators and Retirement Advisors scare us with big numbers like ₹20 crore or ₹10 crore required for retirement?

Also, does this generation, now in their 40s, think it will be healthier than their parents? And the retirement age of 60 looks unnecessary? Can most of us go beyond say 65 years of age?

To me all the 3 questions have one answer – YES.

- What if we pick a less taxing job at age 50 so that we can go on till 70, and enjoy our journey?
- The amount of money needed to retire is much less if the retirement age is changed to 70 years – this reduces stress for sure.
- There is enough proof that working till 70 will help in delaying the onset of dementia, and other brain related illnesses.
- Even though India has a young population, the experience, and contacts of the older people should be useful to the country also.
- Unless there is a strong pull-retirement i.e. your hobbies or interests are pulling you, there is no great reason why people should retire early.
- If the challenges of work – physical, social, intellectual – are making the persons better equipped to handle their retirement, this is again good for the country, is it not?
- One huge advantage is of course the continuing of Group Medical Insurance till the age of 70 – the savings here for the retiree is not to be scoffed at. It is huge indeed – and for the corporate there will only be a slight increase in the total premium, because the average would be much lower.

Do we really want a life of endless leisure? Can we really handle that? Many of us still want to do some teaching, training, mentoring, and coaching –will we give up all this? Maybe some of us want the social advantages of being with younger people –money could just be an added bonus.

What about those who want to have a nice balance of something to do and something to have fun? What if our body does not allow us to work? Well this article is only for those who have good health and want to continue earning – those who can physically, mentally, socially, and financially have a choice!

Income Tax department to nudge taxpayers to pay correct advance taxes

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

THE income tax department will send notices to intimate taxpayers who made significant financial transactions but the payment of taxes for FY 2023-24 (AY 2024-25) is not commensurate with the financial transactions made by them.

The tax department plans to intimate such taxpayers through email and SMS, urging them to compute their advance tax liability correctly and deposit the due advance tax on or before 15 March 2024.

Such mails and SMSes will be marked as Advance Tax e-Campaign-Significant Transactions for AY 2024-25. According to a press statement by the Income Tax Department, it has received certain information on specific financial transactions undertaken by persons/entities during the current financial year FY2023-24.

"On the basis of analysis of the taxes paid so far during the current financial year, the department has identified such persons/entities where payment of taxes for FY 2023-24 is not commensurate with the financial transactions made by the persons/entities concerned, during the said period," said the statement. The Income Tax Department receives information of specified financial transactions of taxpayers from various sources.

To increase transparency and to promote voluntary tax compliance, this information is reflected in the Annual Information Statement (AIS) module and is available to the persons/entities for viewing. The value of 'Significant Transactions' in the AIS has been used for carrying out this analysis. One can see the details of significant transactions by logging into their e-filing account (if already created) and going to the Compliance Portal.

Byju's releases full payment to 25% employees

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Bengaluru

EDTECH firm Byju's has released the full salary to 25% of employees in the lower pay scale while it has made partial payment to the rest of the workforce.

In a letter to employees, Byju's said, "We processed your salary for February late night on Friday. However, due to yesterday being a second Saturday and on account of the long weekend, we expect the salaries to be reflected in your accounts on Monday. We sincerely apologise for any inconvenience caused by this delay and are grateful for your understanding." It added, "As you know, a group of investors has blocked the funds raised through the rights issue, rendering them temporarily unavailable for our business purposes. This situation has created an immediate financial constraint for the company. However, we assure you that we are actively working to resolve this matter and restore normalcy." Also, many employees received a letter saying that the firm has made partial payment to them.

India, EFTA sign trade pact to promote exports

MONIKA YADAV @ New Delhi

INDIA and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) on Sunday bolstered their economic ties by signing of a Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA).

This agreement marks the first Free Trade Agreement (FTA) signed by India with four developed nations within the EFTA bloc, including Switzerland, Iceland, Norway, and Liechtenstein.

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal hailed TEPA as a modern and ambitious pact which includes a binding commitment of $100 billion in investments and the creation of 1 million direct jobs in India over the next 15 years. "The agreement will give a boost to Make in India and provide opportunities to young & talented workforce. The FTA will provide a window to Indian exporters to access large European and global markets," Goyal said.

Comprising 14 comprehensive chapters touching upon various aspects of trade, the TEPA focuses on crucial elements such as market access, rules of origin, investment promotion, intellectual property rights, and sustainable development. Key highlights of the agreement include EFTA offering access to 92.2% of its tariff lines, covering 99.6% of India's exports, while India reciprocates by opening up 82.7% of its tariff lines, encompassing 95.3% of EFTA exports. The EFTA's market access offer covers 100% of non-agri products and tariff concession on Processed Agricultural Products (PAP). "India is offering 82.7% of its tariff lines which covers 95.3% of EFTA exports of which more than 80% import is Gold. The effective duty on Gold remains untouched.Sensitivity related to PLI in sectors such as pharma, medical devices & processed food etc. have been taken while extending offers. Sectors such as dairy, soya, coal and sensitive agricultural products are kept in exclusion list," the commerce ministry said.

The agreement will give a boost to Make in India and provide opportunities to young & talented workforce. The FTA will provide a window to Indian exporters to access large European, global markets.

Piyush Goyal, Commerce Minister

Effective duty on gold remains untouched

India is offering 82.7% of its tariff lines that covers 95.3% of EFTA exports of which more than 80% import is gold. The effective duty on gold remains untouched. Sensitivity related to PLI in sectors such as pharma, medical devices & processed food etc. have been taken while extending offers. Sectors such as dairy, soya, coal and sensitive agricultural products are kept in exclusion list.

India has offered 105 sub-sectors to the EFTA and secured commitments in 128 sub-sectors from Switzerland, 114 from Norway, 107 from Liechtenstein, and 110 from Iceland. TEPA is set to drive the export of services, focusing on sectors where India holds key strengths and interests such as IT services, business services, cultural endeavors, sports and recreation services, education services, and audio-visual offerings. TEPA also has provisions for Mutual Recognition Agreements in Professional Services like nursing, chartered accountants, architects etc.

Swiss watches, chocolates at lower prices

As a result of the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) between India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) nations, Indians can anticipate reduced prices on renowned Swiss watches and chocolates due to the duty concessions negotiated by New Delhi.

As per the agreement terms, India will gradually eliminate basic customs duties on Swiss chocolates and wrist as well as pocket watches over a seven-year span. Currently, India imposes a 30% import duty on chocolates and 20% on various Swiss watch models, which will be phased out to zero under the pact. In addition, India has also extended concessions on Swiss wines based on their CIF (cost, insurance and freight) values. Wines with CIF between $5 and $15 will receive immediate benefits.

Djokovic claws out win in return to Indian Wells

Novak Djokovic struggled to a winning comeback at the ATP-WTA Indian Wells Masters five years after his last appearance, defeating Aleksandar Vukic 6-2, 5-7, 6-3 on Saturday. World No 1 Djokovic, who had not played since losing an Australian Open semifinal to Jannik Sinner in January, is chasing a sixth title at the desert venue in the season's first Masters event.

BCCI starts big initiative, require finishing touch

Cricket body batting for Tests but will they be able to prioritise WTC final in 2025 — if team qualifies — or will they be found wanting again

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN @Chennai

OVER the last three weeks or so, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has made some noises about prioritising domestic red-ball cricket. They have also, seemingly, demoted a couple of players as they didn't pay heed to their words (the likes of Shreyas Iyer and Ishan Kishan are without central contracts as things stand).

On Friday, they continued to travel down this road as they further incentivised players who feature in the longest format of the game. Called the 'Test Cricket Incentive Scheme', a cricketer's fee could go up as high as 300% per Test if they feature in over 75% of the games played in that season.

"This scheme," the BCCI said in a statement, "is not only designed to encourage players to engage in the purest format of the sport but also addresses the evolving dynamics of the cricketing landscape, ensuring parity with match fees in other formats and league cricket. This initiative aligns with our vision of promoting Test cricket as the pinnacle of the sport." On the face of it, this is a good scheme. Other cricketing boards have seen players shunning Tests for white-ball tournaments.

But one couldn't help but wonder if the BCCI would prioritise next year's World Test Championship final (India are the current leaders) as well as the five-Test England series that will likely begin after the culmination of the one-off final. What's the connection between the BCCI and a match where the identity of both teams are yet to be known? As always, context is king.

Last year's IPL finished on May 29. Three cricketers who featured in that final (Mohammed Shami, Ravindra Jadeja and Ajinkya Rahane) reached the UK a few days later. Less than a week after arriving in London, they faced up to Australia. You could probably argue that wasn't ideal (some of the Australians had already been in England by then while others, like India, had travelled to England just prior to the beginning of the final).

By the end of Day Three, India were already down. Just before the start of Day Three, Shardul Thakur had a chat with Ricky Ponting. It revealed a lot about where Thakur's body was. "I had a chat with

BCCI secretary Jay Shah (R) with Rohit Sharma | AFP

Shardul and he said he's started to feel the pinch," Ponting had told the media just before tea on the third day. "Their preparation probably wasn't ideal coming into a one-off Test with all their players being at the IPL. Few of the Australian boys were there. Few of the Australian boys hadn't done anything for three months either... what was the best preparation coming into a game like this? Was it playing pretty high-quality competitive cricket in the IPL or was it better off being at home, resting up and doing a bit of non-competitive training?"

Thakur, like some of the others, was feeling the pinch because he had bowled 23 overs across 1.5 days. At the IPL, he had bowled 21 across two months. For the record, none of Australia's frontline bowlers featured at the IPL (while Pat Cummins had opted out citing a heavy workload, Mitchell Starc didn't register. Nathan Lyon and Scott Boland were also fresh).

Skipper Rohit Sharma, when he was speaking to the media after the match, was honest enough to admit they would have liked 20-25 days to prepare for the final. "Ideally, we would want to have time in hand to prepare and give enough rest to the bowlers," he had said. "Sometimes it can be tough because playing T20 cricket, you completely bowl different lengths, different lines, lot of change-ups. And then Test cricket obviously requires a lot of discipline, hitting that area consistently and challenging the batsmen — but again you know (Mohammed) Shami, (Mohammed) Siraj, Umesh (Yadav), they all are experienced, they obviously know how to prepare themselves and get ready for a game like this. But in an ideal scenario, yes, I would prefer it if we have 20-25 days to prepare for a game like this."

The BCCI have been warned. But that's just half the job. The calendar is unforgiving, as always. After India return from Australia, there's the prospect of travelling to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy in February-March (as it stands). You then have the IPL. And you are already cutting into the 20-25 days the captain had wanted as lead time.

So, will the BCCI give the likes of Yashasvi Jaiswal (zero Tests there) and Shubman Gill (three Tests at an average of 14.6) an option to skip part of the IPL to get used to the conditions. Will Sharma be empowered enough to request the BCCI to send the bowlers before the league finishes?

Answers to these questions may come by this time next year.

Tale of redemption for wrestler Sujeet

FIROZ MIRZA @Chennai

SINCE July last year when the Delhi High Court rejected his and woman wrestler Antim Panghal's writ petition, Sujeet Kalkal had only one dream in mind — make it to the Paris Olympic Qualifier at any cost. The court had then upheld the decision of the ad-hoc committee giving direct entry to Bajrang Punia and Vinesh Phogat in the men's freestyle 65kg and women's wrestling 53kg weight categories respectively for the Asian Games last year. The ad hoc committee, headed by former Wushu Federation of India president Bhupinder Bajwa, blatantly disregarded the wrestlers' repeated requests.

The setback meant Sujeet lost the selection trials the next day and went on to lose another trial — this time for the 2023 World Championships, an Olympic qualifying event. It was a difficult time for the 21-year-old Sujeet but his father-cum-coach Dayanand Kalkal didn't let him lose the focus. The words of wisdom from his father did the trick as Sujeet won the 65kg gold at the 2023 Goa National Games and was crowned national champion in the Jaipur senior national championships this year.

With the Asian Olympic Games Qualifier scheduled in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan from April 19 to 21, Sujeet got yet another opportunity to fulfil his dream. But for that he has to win the selection trials. The competition was tough with the group of wrestlers vying for the top spot comprising a familiar face Bajrang, who in the past was selected for the Asian Games directly without trials forcing Sujeet to move the court. "Sujeet is young. The court's verdict was a big setback but in sports you are bound to have ups and downs," father Dayanand told this daily. While Sujeet didn't get a chance to spar with Bajrang on the mat during the selection trials held at the SAI Centre in Sonepat on Sunday, he did outmuscle Rohit, who had earlier defeated the Tokyo Olympic bronze medallist 9-1 in the semifinal. The victory by technical superiority in the final helped Sujeet secure a place in the national team for the Olympic Qualifier and Asian Championships.

"Revenge is not the right word but yes the victory is very satisfying. The goal now is to earn a quota in the 65kg during the qualifier and then eye an Olympic medal. Sujeet will head to Russia for exposure-cum-training camp before the qualifier," added the father. Interestingly, Bajrang was not the lone elite wrestler failing to qualify as the Tokyo Olympic silver medallist Ravi Dahiya also lost the 57kg trials with rising star Aman Sehrawat, his under-study at the Chhatrasal Akhada, New Delhi, winning the final. Another Tokyo Olympian Deepak Punia (86kg), however, won the trials to make it to the squad. The women's trials are scheduled at SAI Centre in Patiala on Monday with all eyes set on Vinesh Phogat, who along with Bajrang and Sakshi Malik led a protest against the former president of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh last year. The WFI was eventually suspended by the United World Wrestling last year. The suspension was revoked last month as the Sanjay Kumar Singh-led federation was recognised by the world body. However, the sports ministry did not lift its suspension imposed on the WFI soon after the election in December 2023.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

Seamers clean out Oz top order to boost NZ

AGENCIES @Christchurch

NEW ZEALAND cleaned out the top four Australian batsmen on Sunday to leave the tourists on 77-4 and facing an uphill task in their chase of 279 to win the second Test in Christchurch. The hosts set a demanding target for an Australian side struggling for runs on a ground where the highest successful fourth innings is 285-8, set by New Zealand against Sri Lanka last year.

Steve Smith, Marnus Labuschagne, Usman Khawaja and Cameron Green were all swiftly sent back to the Hagley Oval pavilion by New Zealand's seamers. Matt Henry had figures of 2-37 with debutant Ben Sears on 2-22. Australia still need 202 runs. At the close of play on day three, Mitchell Marsh was not-out 27 with Travis Head unbeaten on 17.

Brief scores: NZ 162 & 372 (R Ravindra 82, Latham 73; Cummins 4/32) vs Australia 256 & 77/4 (Marsh 27 batting; Sears 2/22).

SatChi's Paris love affair continues

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty enjoy the winning moment | BADMINTON PHOTO/BAI

THE Arena Porte de la Chapelle will host badminton at the Paris Olympics. If you are an Indian sports fan, write the name down. For, one of their medals will likely come at this newly constructed multi-purpose in the city's 18th arrondissement.

On Sunday, less than 140 days out from the above-mentioned Games, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty cantered to their first title of the season. In the process, the gun Indian pair continued their ever blossoming story in the City of Love. It was in Paris in 2019 where the pair first showcased what they were all about as they reached the final of the Super 750 event. It was their first at this level. In 2022, they won this event; again, their first at this level. Over the last two years, they have added other titles to an ever-expanding trophy cabinet.

Now, they have added another to that collection. The most impressive thing about the World No. 1 duo is the way they combine defence with attack. When they get on the rampage, teams — even World Championships medallists — can seldom stay with them.

This tournament has once highlighted that. Five matches, five straight games wins with their sternest test coming in the opening round when they ran into familiar opponents, Ong Yew Sin and Teo Ee Yi.

One look at the scoreline will give you an enough impression of the stranglehold they had over their opponents: 21-13, 24-22, 21-13, 21-12, 21-19, 21-13, 21-13, 21-16, 21-11 and, finally, 21-17.

Up against the unseeded pairing of Lee Jhe-Huei/ Yang Po-Hsuan, it had looked like a procession. But they did face a tricky period when the Chinese Taipei duo had taken a small lead in the middle of the second stanza. But the Indians recalibrated and ran away with the match.

Is England's Bazball a delusion or solution?

GOMESH S @Dharamsala

'Delulu is the solulu'.

It's a famous phrase doing rounds in Gen Z pop culture. The term 'delulu' is an abbreviation, originating from delusional behaviours in K-pop fan communities, and 'solulu' means solution. The entire phrase — often used as a meme template by millennials and Gen Zs — means making a conscious choice to be optimistic in the face of a disappointing reality.

Three weeks ago, it came up at the Rajkot press conference hall. Ben Duckett had said that England and Bazball, maybe, should take credit for how Yashasvi Jaiswal, who hit 26 sixes in the series, batted. "When you see players from the opposition playing like that, it almost feels like we should take some credit that they are playing differently than how other people play Test cricket," he had said. That quote led to some chuckles. Perhaps, one can safely say, England were just being 'delulu is the solulu'.

Here is what England captain

England head coach Brendon McCullum (L) & skipper Ben Stokes | AFP

Ben Stokes said on the eve of the fifth Test when asked about the series loss: "There is obviously disappointment. But again, we have progressed so much on this tour. In a results-based business, that can sometimes sound stupid and deluded. You go on about India not having their best players. You look at the players we came here with, we were written off completely before we had played a game." It does not help when the players, at least some of them, seem to have caught up with the label of Bazball. That perhaps explains why someone like Duckett genuinely believed what he said three weeks ago in Rajkot. Even Stokes kept going back and forth. While he admitted disappointment on his own form, Stokes did not even talk about things he could have done differently after a 4-1 loss. "I don't deal in hindsight, sorry," he said on Saturday. At the same time, he would also say, "The media named Bazball — everyone says 'what is it?'. In my opinion, it's wanting to be a better player. In the face of defeat and failure, Bazball will hopefully inspire people to become better players and become even better than what we are."

The openers have grown in confidence. Zak Crawley (407) and Duckett (343) scored a lot more than they did the last time they toured India. Both Hartley and Bashir might not be finished products, but they could well evolve into better Test cricketers with experience. This is what Stokes meant when he said, "I judge a lot of what we do in terms of inputs of every individual towards the team."

Yes, they played really bad shots. And yes, some of them, including Stokes, looked clueless against spin, and the Bazball narratives got a bit tiring as the series progressed. But it is hard to deny that England challenged, and pushed India to dig deep — at least till Ranchi, and that series was entertaining.

This brings the focus back to what Stokes said about sounding "deluded". Maybe, delulu is the solulu for England, and it is absolutely fine because it seems to be working for them. But what world cricket can do without is the narrative that it is the solution for everyone else too.

Ranji Trophy: Shardul leads Mumbai fightback

AGENCIES @Mumbai

SEASONED duo Shreyas Iyer and Ajinkya Rahane's run drought continued but Shardul Thakur's all-rounder performance helped hosts Mumbai to claw their way back against a gutsy Vidarbha on the opening day of the Ranji Trophy final.

After scoring a counter-punching 75 off only 69 balls to give Mumbai's below-par first innings score of 224, some semblance of respectability, Thakur also dismissed veteran opener Dhruv Shorey (0) with an angular delivery which got him a favourable DRS result.

Vidarbha were 31/3 at stumps with another 193 runs in arrears in the first innings with Atharva Taide (21 not out) and night-watchman Aditya Thakare at the crease.

Playing the last first-class game of his career, medium pacer Dhawal Kulkarni bowled his customary late outswingers which had Aman Mokhade (8) and Test triple centurion Karun Nair (0) nicking it to Hardik Tamore behind stumps.

Shardul Thakur (2nd L) celebrates after taking a wicket on Sunday | PTI

Brief scores: Mumbai 224 in 64.3 ovs (P Shaw 46, B Lalwani 37, S Thakur 75; U Yadav 2/43, H Dubey 3/62, Y Thakur 3/54) lead Vidarbha 31/3 in 13 ovs (A Taide 21 n.o; S Thakur 1/14, D Kulkarni 2/9).

Mumbai's top guns Rahane and Iyer were both dismissed for identical scores of 7 in a shocking collapse that saw the 41-time champions slipping from 81/0 to 111/6 on either side of the lunch break.

EXPRESS READ

Ekta betters 3,000m steeplechase NR

LUCKNOW: Madhya Pradesh's Ekta Pradeep Dey improved the national women's 3,000m steeplechase record on the concluding day of the 22nd National Junior U20 Federation Athletics Championships. Ekta clocked 10:10.08 seconds on her way to winning gold. That mark was was better than the Asian U20 qualification time of 11:30.00 and she also improved the national record of 10:29.50 seconds.

WPL: Richa's 51 in vain as DC post 1-run victory

New Delhi: Delhi Capitals beat Royal Challengers Bangalore by a solitary run in the Women's Premier League here on Sunday. Needing 17 off last over to reach a target of 182, Bangalore's Rich Ghosh hit two sixes to bring the equation down to two runs off the final delivery, but was run out off the final ball.

Brief score: DC 181/5 in 20 ovs (Jemimah Rodrigues 58; Shreyanka Patil 4/26) bt RCB 180/7 in 20 ovs (Richa Ghosh 51).

Mohun Bagan go top after derby win

AGENCIES @New Delhi

MOHUN Bagan Super Giant jumped to the top of the points table with an emphatic 3-1 victory against East Bengal FC at the Salt Lake Stadium in the second Kolkata Derby of the Indian Super League (ISL) on Sunday.

The Mariners and their imperious frontline put on a full throttle attacking showpiece in the first half where they hit the back of the net thrice to push the Red & Gold Brigade back early on in the proceedings. Jason Cummings, Liston Colaco, and Dimitrios Petratos scored once each as Saul Crespo's fantastic strike in the second essay of the match was insufficient for the Carles Cuadrat-coached

East Bengal's Dimitri Petratos rejoices after scoring against East Bengal | ISL

side to get any points from this contest.

East Bengal FC had the first chance to get their foot ahead in the contest, with Mohun Bagan Super Giant goalkeeper Vishal Kaith bringing East Bengal FC striker Cleiton Silva down in the box in the 12th minute of the game.

FOOTBALL

Liverpool & Man City play out thrilling draw

AGENCIES @London

LIVERPOOL and Manchester City shared a pulsating 1-1 draw in their title showdown to leave Arsenal on top of the Premier League, while Tottenham routed Aston Villa 4-0 to reignite their bid for a top four finish on Sunday. City took the lead through John Stones' first-half strike, but Alexis Mac Allister equalised with a penalty soon after the interval at Anfield.

The result was exactly what Arsenal wanted as the Gunners retained first place, a position they earned when Kai Havertz's late header clinched a dramatic 2-1 win against Brentford on Saturday. Arsenal are above second-placed Liverpool on goal difference, with a +7 advantage, while champions City are one point adrift of the top two, with all three teams having 10 games left. In a title race for the ages, Arsenal will travel to City for a potentially decisive clash in both sides' next league game on March 31. Liverpool levelled in the 50th minute when City defender Nathan Ake played an ill-judged back-pass that was intercepted by Darwin Nunez.

An already seismic showdown was given extra significance by Jurgen Klopp's last top-flight meeting with City boss Pep Guardiola after his bombshell announcement that he will quit Liverpool at the end of this season. After jousting for supremacy throughout their reigns, it was fitting that Klopp held Guardiola in a warm embrace at the final whistle of a clash that leaves the destiny of the title still in the balance.

Liverpool's Alexis Mac Allister celebrates after scoring the equaliser | AFP

Results: West Ham **2-2** Burnley; Brighton **1-0** Nottingham Forest; Aston Villa **0-4** Tottenham; Liverpool **1-1** Man City.

PSG draw again

Paris: French league leader Paris Saint-Germain drew 2-2 at home to Reims on Sunday as Kylian Mbappe was left on the bench for the second straight league game. It was defending champion PSG's third straight league draw and the attack looked tame without him. Mbapp' came on in the 73rd minute with the score 2-2.

STANDARDISED TESTS ALL OVER THE WORLD

IN Part II of the list of international standardised exams, we take a look at a few such tests from around the world to understand the essence of how they are conducted elsewhere. Here's what we found

AUSTRALIA

STAT
- Special Tertiary Admissions Test
- Developed by the Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER)
- National test designed to assess aptitude for learning in a tertiary environment
- Does not test specific academic content

UMAT
- Undergraduate Medical Admissions Test
- Administered by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)
- Entry into undergraduate medical courses

GAMSAT
- Graduate Medical School Admissions Test/Medical College Admission Test
- Conducted by Australian Council for Educational Research
- Has unlimited number of attempts

CHILE

- Prueba de Aptitud Académica (PAA) or The University Selection Test
- Offered by College Board Puerto Rico y America Latina (CBPRAL)
- Scores used by universities across Latin America

CHINA

Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE)
- Only administered in Hong Kong
- Organised by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA)
- Only 138 universities in Mainland China accept HKDSE scores

COLOMBIA

- Instituto Colombiano para el Fomento de la Educación Superior or Saber 11
- Conducted by the Colombian Institute for the Evaluation of Education
- Similar to the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)

IRAN

- Konkour or the Iranian University Entrance Exam
- Conducted by the Iranian Ministry of Education's National Organization for Educational Testing
- Weightage given to both high school test scores and Konkour

FRANCE

- Le Baccalaureat
- Conducted by French Ministry of National Education
- Three different types of exams – Le Bac General, Technologique, or Professional
- If students do not pass, then they have to retake the final year of school

GREECE

- Panhellenic exams
- Conducted by Greece's state universities
- Requires intense preparation hence, students take private tutoring called Frontsiria

GERMANY

- Abiturzeugnis or Abitur is a higher education qualification requirement
- Conducted by each German state
- The exam serves as a proficiency test, a qualification for university entrance and a credential for employment

NETHERLANDS

- Eindexamen
- Conducted by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
- Three stages namely mondelinge examen (oral exams), luistertoetsen (listening tests) and the centraal examen (main exams)

ISRAEL

- ha-Psikhometri or the Psychometric Entrance Tests (PET)
- Administered by the National Institute for Testing and Evaluation (NITE)
- Subjects requiring expertise, such as medicine, require the taking of additional tests

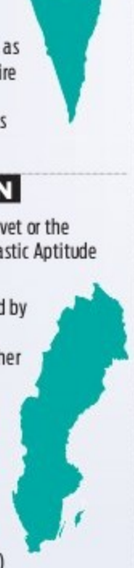
RUSSIA

- Yediniy gosudarstvenniy ekzamen or the Unified State Exam (USE)
- Conducted by the Federal Service for Supervision in Education and Science (Rosobrnadzor)
- Scores obtained in Russian language and Mathematics are given high importance

SPAIN

- Evaluación de Acceso a la Universidad or the Selectividad
- Conducted by the corresponding autonomous regions' education authorities
- Also accepted by universities in the US

SWEDEN



- Högskoleprovet or the Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test (SweSAT)
- Administered by the Swedish Council for Higher Education
- Total score for each section converted into a scale ranging from 0.0 (low grade) to 2.0 (highest grade)

TUNISIA

- Examen National du Baccalauréat or the Tunisian Baccalaureate
- Conducted by the Tunisian Ministry of Higher Education
- Students passing the exam are guaranteed a position in a university

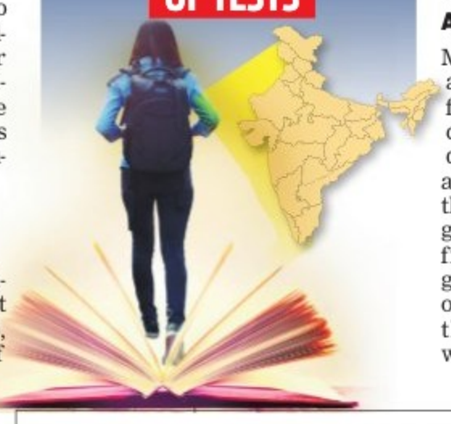
FINLAND

- Ylioppilastutkinto or The Finnish Matriculation Exam
- Conducted by Finland's Matriculation Examination Board
- Test also constitutes the high school final exam with the university entrance exam

Is India ready to introduce the concept of One Nation, One Exam Policy yet? **Lovely Majumdar** spoke to academicians from schools and universities, standardised test conductors, and a student to understand if such a policy can be imbibed into the Indian educational system. Here's what they have to say

ONE NATION ONE EXAM

EXPLORING STANDARDISATION OF TESTS



ONE NATION, ONE EXAM

With the introduction of the NEP, the proposal of a nationalised exam has been doing the rounds, which Sachin Jain says would be a significant shift in India's educational landscape aiming to streamline the examination process and ensure uniformity in assessment criteria. "The MoE has started implementing this. A specific initiative has already been formed under the name PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development) for the school boards." YouTuber Santhosh puts forth a pertinent point and says, "It can get quite tricky to devise a plan to conduct one exam, with an added confusion over subjects, courses, colleges and universities"

AS the year 2024 begins, it is time for students to hustle for exams, the same exams which are often a launch pad towards their destined career goals. Apart from the examinations conducted by the respective state colleges and universities, students who are in school or about to graduate are positively aware of the exams held nationally that have gained immense credit with time. It can be said that these exams are going to only increase in relevance with time.

Looking back at the history of major examinations such as the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE), National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), and the recently introduced Common University Entrance Test (CUET), one can identify the imminent changes that were introduced to infuse ease in the conduction of exams and to fulfil several other purposes. For example, the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the University Grants Commission (UGC) collectively brought the graduate central university entrance examinations under one single umbrella, naming it the CUET, which was introduced in the year 2021.

Although these exams have firmly established their importance, encouraging intense competition, they continue to grapple with tech glitches and a few other challenges. So, do these standardised tests then fail to fulfil their goals, or has the implementation been successful so far? *EdexLive* got in touch with professionals, and several academicians to understand whether the standardisation of tests is the way forward or if there is still some evolution underway before we can achieve the 'One Nation, One Exam' dream, as envisioned by the new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Can standardised tests fuel aggressive competition?

Professor Ganesan Kannabiran, Director of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), is of the notion that the motive of these tests is to ensure quality, and when it comes to judging students based on their merit, he says that there is a reason why these exams are called "competitive examinations" which gives the meritorious students a fair chance to bag the best for their career. He further states that standardised tests are conducted to also ensure quality in education. "If different exams are to be introduced, the quality would differ as well. In the case of self-financed institutions, the disparity can be found in order to attract a greater influx of students," said the NAAC Director.

Sreevidhya Santhosh, an educational entrepreneur and a YouTuber, says that the competition will always be high. "Although with due time if there is a greater influx of students and not an exponential increase in opportunities, the competition is certainly going to get tougher," she shares.

new exams

An annual affair

Most of these standardised tests are an annual affair and take place before a new academic year begins at colleges and universities, but students have complained that in the absence of other examinations, their career gets hinged on one single day. Anushka Bagchi, currently finishing her final semester of her graduate studies at the University of Kalyani, West Bengal, expressed that clashing of university exams with other national exams can, indeed, be inconvenient.

Bridge the gap between urban and rural

An undertaking of a standardised test can be advantageous given that it ensures uniformity when it comes to the curriculum. Sachin Jain, Country Manager of the Educational Testing Service (ETS) India and South Asia, lists an important point pertaining to such tests, and said that the policy will help reduce the chance of regional variations and different biases that can take place while grading.

"This will further ensure that all students are evaluated on the same criteria, regardless of their geographical location or background," said Jain, but DVR Murthy who is the Dean of Examinations of Andhra University says that there is a lack of uniformity in the curriculum of different universities when it comes to certain exams, like CUET examinations for the postgraduate courses.

But a standardised approach towards these examinations can also be advantageous for students transitioning from a school level to a university level, says Chairperson of the SAI International Education Group, Dr Silpi Sahoo. She says that even though there remains a division, standardised approaches aid in the mobility of students, thereby, making it easier for them to transition to schools or states, as the evaluation criteria remain consistent.

If different exams are to be introduced, the quality would differ as well

— Prof Ganesan Kannabiran, Director, NAAC

Standardised testing promotes fairness and transparency in the evaluation process

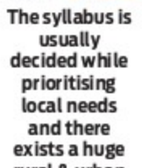
— Sachin Jain, Country Manager, ETS India and South Asia

The syllabus is usually decided while prioritising local needs and there exists a huge rural & urban divide

— DVR Murthy, Dean of Examinations, Andhra University

Standardised tests being conducted once a year would reduce logistical burden and added complications of multiple tests

— Sanjeev Phatak, Director, former AIMA



Whether there is one exam or multiple, the level of competition will always be on the rise

— Sreevidhya Santhosh, Popular YouTuber and entrepreneur

Educators must be well-equipped in order to effectively implement standardised curricula and hone children for these tests

— Dr Silpi Sahoo, Chairperson, SAI International Education Group

Why CBT trumps all exam formats

Globally, most standardised tests (tests that are administered and scored in a consistent and standard manner with the same question/task types and marking criteria), such as Graduate Record Examinations (GRE), Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), have different versions: PBT (paper-based test), CBT (computer-based exam), and iBT (Internet-based test).

For example, TOEFL offers all three versions. Each of these versions has key differences in the way the test is administered and taken. Candidates taking the TOEFL iBT and CBT listen with a headset, speak into a microphone, and type their answers using a keyboard while taking the listening, speaking, and writing modules, respectively. The TOEFL PBT is fully paper and pencil-based.

In India, the most common standardised tests are the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE) and the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET). The National Testing Agency (NTA) conducts JEE either in online mode or as a CBT, whereas it conducts NEET as a paper-based test (PBT).

Which is better: iBT, CBT, or PBT?

The iBT and CBT versions are more or less the same. In a CBT, questions appear on the computer screen one by one, and candidates choose the correct answer on the screen using a mouse. All multiple-choice questions (MCQs) are answered in this manner. For a few tests, candidates are allowed to use rough paper to solve problems. We have two categories of candidates.

IIBS BENGALURU
Redefining Leading Talents
16 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
International Institute of Business Studies
Approved by AICTE | Affiliated to Bangalore City University | Ministry of Education, Government of India
NAAC A GRADE
Highest CGPA 3.20 in 4-Point Scale
ADMISSIONS OPEN FOR PGDM / MBA
BATCH (2024-26)
CAMPUS PLACEMENT 2021-23
HIGHEST SALARY PACKAGE OFFERED
PGDM ₹51 Lakhs Per Annum
MBA ₹48 Lakhs Per Annum
MERIT SCHOLARSHIP*
FEMALE CANDIDATES UPTO ₹2.30 LAKHS
MALE CANDIDATES UPTO ₹2.10 LAKHS
*TO AVAIL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP APPLY ON OR BEFORE 11TH MARCH 2024
www.iibs.edu.in | www.iibsonline.com
99864 15333 / 96202 48214
Near International Airport, Bengaluru-562 157.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS City

Bengaluru Express

READ SHARE FOLLOW
newindianexpress.com
Mail us: bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com

11.03.2024
MONDAY

DAY'S DIARY

Nuclear disaster

After a major earthquake, a 15-metre tsunami disabled power and cooling of three Fukushima Daiichi reactors, causing a nuclear accident in 2011

THE EARTHQUAKE

The Great East Japan Earthquake of magnitude 9.0 was centred 130 km offshore in Sendai, Miyagi, eastern coast of Honshu Island, and was a double quake of about three minutes

NUCLEAR EMERGENCY

The nuclear plant shut down the reactors automatically. After a wave hit Fukushima, the water flooded the plant and knocked out the emergency generators

DEATH TOLL

Reports reveal a death toll of 19,500, 16 workers injured in the explosions, dozens were exposed to radiation and 47,000 residents left their homes

The multi-hued history of womanhood

PG3

'NOT A CONTROVERSY, IT'S A CONTEMPORARY ISSUE'

Amidst the Kashi's Gyanvapi mosque dispute, eminent historian and author Vikram Sampath delves into the complex interplay of myth, religion, and colonial legal histories in his latest book, *Waiting for Shiva*

POOJA DAS

IN the last few years, spiritual and religious fervour have become a visible part of the public discourse after the Supreme Court's verdict of the Babri Masjid demolition that finally culminated in January with the 'Pran Prathishtha' of the Ram Mandir. But while the case was laid to rest for the general public, another remains in full view. It's the long-standing dispute over Kashi's Gyanvapi mosque built by the Mughal ruler Aurangzeb in 1669. As the legal case is developing at record speed, historian and writer **Vikram Sampath's** latest book, *Waiting for Shiva: Unearthing the Truth of Kashi's Gyan Vapi* (₹699; BluOne Ink) attempts to weave the spiritual, scriptural, and legal histories of one of India's most venerated sites, Kashi. Launching the book in Bengaluru recently, Sampath, though a historian himself quips that 'we shouldn't live too much in the past'. And so even amidst a dispute, which many see as a controversy blurring the lines of secularism and democracy, Sampath says it has much contemporary relevance. "It's not a controversy, it's a contemporary issue, I would say," he tells *CE*.

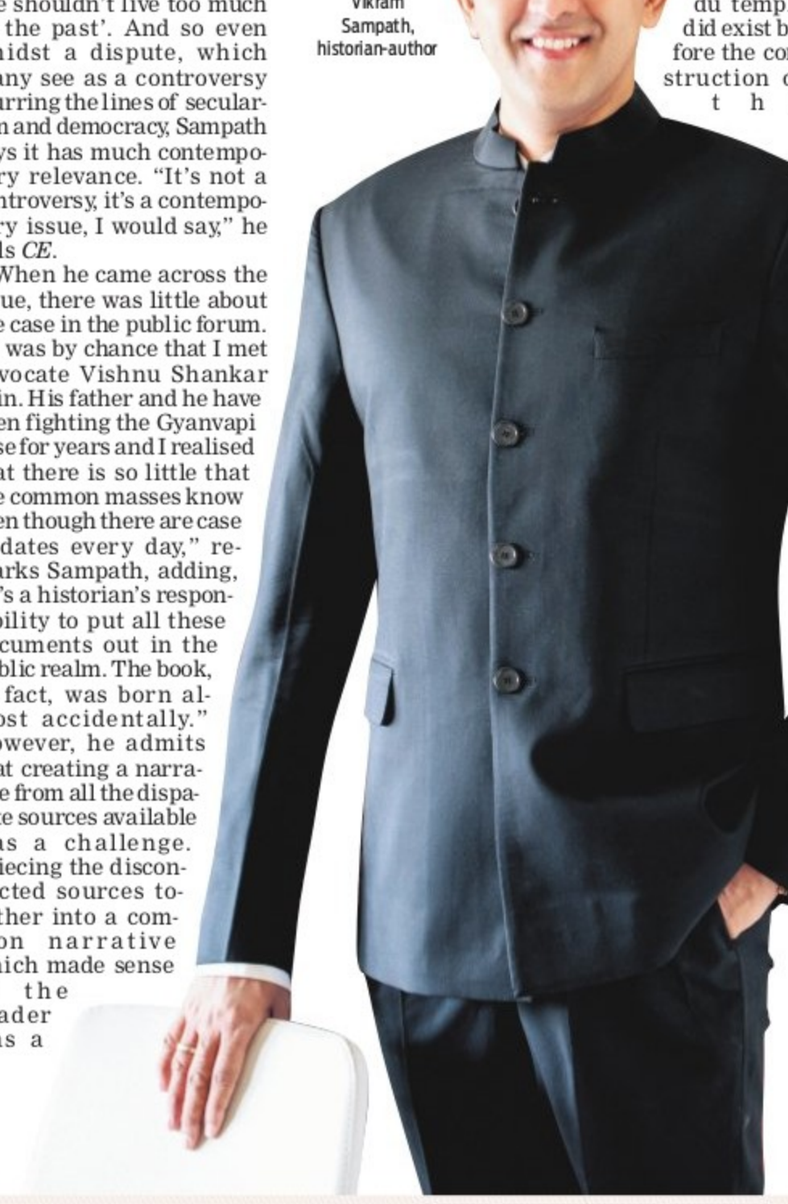
When he came across the issue, there was little about the case in the public forum. "It was by chance that I met advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain. His father and he have been fighting the Gyanvapi case for years and I realised that there is so little that the common masses know even though there are case updates every day," remarks Sampath, adding, "It's a historian's responsibility to put all these documents out in the public realm. The book, in fact, was born almost accidentally." However, he admits that creating a narrative from all the disparate sources available was a challenge. "Piecing the disconnected sources together into a common narrative which made sense to the reader was a huge challenge," says Sampath.

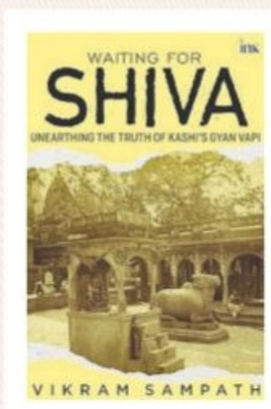
> *It's a historian's responsibility to put all these documents out in the public realm. The book, in fact, was born almost accidentally. Piecing the disconnected sources together into a common narrative which made sense to the reader was a huge challenge*
>
> Vikram Sampath, historian-author

He began this project with the intention of writing the legal history and later expanded the scope of his work. "It takes a larger canvas, which looks at the scriptural and the spiritual significance of Kashi in the Indian consciousness with historical records of the past, accounts of travellers, British colonial records, and court documents, both pre and post-Independence because the place has always been one of contestation," he adds. The legal dispute, claiming that the mosque has been built on the remains of a part of the ancient Kashi Vishwanath temple, has been in court since 1991 but gained traction in 2023 when a local court ordered a survey of the Gyanvapi mosque by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). After the survey, ASI reported that a Hindu temple did exist before the construction of the mosque. On January 31, a local court allowed Hindus to offer prayers in the southern cellar of the Gyanvapi mosque.

Sampath was actually gearing up for his next book on Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan when he decided to put that project on the back-burner. The book's completion within a remarkably short span of six to seven months is a deviation from Sampath's typical multi-year projects. "This book required burning the midnight oil over the last five months," shares Sampath, for whom *Waiting for Shiva* is not just a historical account but a nuanced exploration of the interplay between religion, myth, and legal history. "I've tried to be objective without flowing into emotions. There are lots of fables in Puranic literature where the truth is told, but it is embedded within fantastic tales. Skanda Purana talks of Shiva's exile and how he tries to come back to Kashi. This may sound like a story but written in the 12th or 13th century, this shows people were chronicling the destruction of the Shiva linga. A lot of this needs to be deductive logic," highlights Sampath.

The prolific writer wants to bring the idea to the public discourse that the fight for Gyanvapi is not a recent one. "This has been going on for 2,000 years. Shrines kept rising and falling, but the Hindus never gave up on it. This book is the story of resilience, resurrection, and reclamation in the wake of historical odds," says Sampath. He also emphasises a pan-India narrative when it comes to Kashi Vishwanath's history. "In the reconstruction of the Vishwanath temple, all parts of India contributed. In Karnataka, we had the Hoysala ruler who donated an entire village so the money from that would go to the pilgrims to pay the jizya tax to go for the tirtha yatra. People never gave up on the site. Today, when people say, 'Let's not bother about it and build something else', I think that is doing injustice to our ancestors. One has to continue to reclaim what is rightfully ours," says Sampath, who has started the Foundation for Indian Historical and Cultural Research to foster alternative scholarships in Indian history.





Is it phallus worship?

The oft-repeated derisive remark is that the Shiva linga is actually the phallus or male genitalia of Bhagwan Shiva that is worshipped. Hindus are often mocked and ridiculed for what is considered a decadent and indecent form of worship. Colonial literature and their faithful inheritors in the present times abound in such references. A story from the Skanda Purana mentions Shiva roaming around naked, holding his linga in his hands. Due to someone's curse, it fell to the ground and started growing and burning the whole world. The Shakti or Devi had to intervene and take the form of a yoni (womb or female genitalia) to bring it under control. Anyone who takes this literally and not as a metaphor can well ridicule Hindus as worshippers of the phallus, which is disgusting according to them. Some Western interpreters also look at *Lingopasana* or the worship of the linga as a fertility cult. They assume that the Hindus worship the linga for reasons of fertility or for the fear of being sterile. But since this interpretation is so unrelatable for common Hindus in general as that is not running through their minds while worshipping a Shiva linga, it is hardly contested, though these notions remain rooted in academic ivory towers or agenda-driven discourses. So, the linga in these interpretations becomes nothing but Shiva's phallus or genital organ. But if you ask a common worshipper, they certainly don't have that perspective. The linga is not worshipped because it's an organ of Shiva or due to its *angatva*. The sacredness or status of a deity implied by the linga is not because it is a part of Shiva's body. Instead, the linga is worshipped as Shiva himself or due to the shivatva of the linga.

(Excerpted with permission from Vikram Sampath's Waiting for Shiva: Unearthing the Truth of Kashi's Gyan Vapi, published by BluOne Ink)

ROARING RECEPTION

Known for films like *Gully Boy* and *Gehraiyaan*, actor Siddhant Chaturvedi during his session at the Under25 Summit at the Jayamahal Palace during the weekend

CITY READ

Renowned stylist participates in Women's Day celebrations

Accor, a leader in hospitality, hosted an event on March 8, in celebration of International Women's Day for women members of ALL – Accor Live Limitless, the group's lifestyle loyalty programme. Held at Novotel Bengaluru Outer Ring Road, the event featured renowned stylist **Dolly Jain**. During the event, Jain, who has dressed several film icons, showcased her skill and creativity in styling the saree.

GRUB HUB

Aslam Gafoor (@aslamgafoor) is a hospitality professional with experience in business development, sales and marketing with well-known hotels, and food and beverage companies. A few of his passions are travel, food and wine, and he enjoys sharing these experiences as a columnist.

THE QUIZ WILL BE PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

Send answers to **bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com** with the subject line **'Food quiz'**

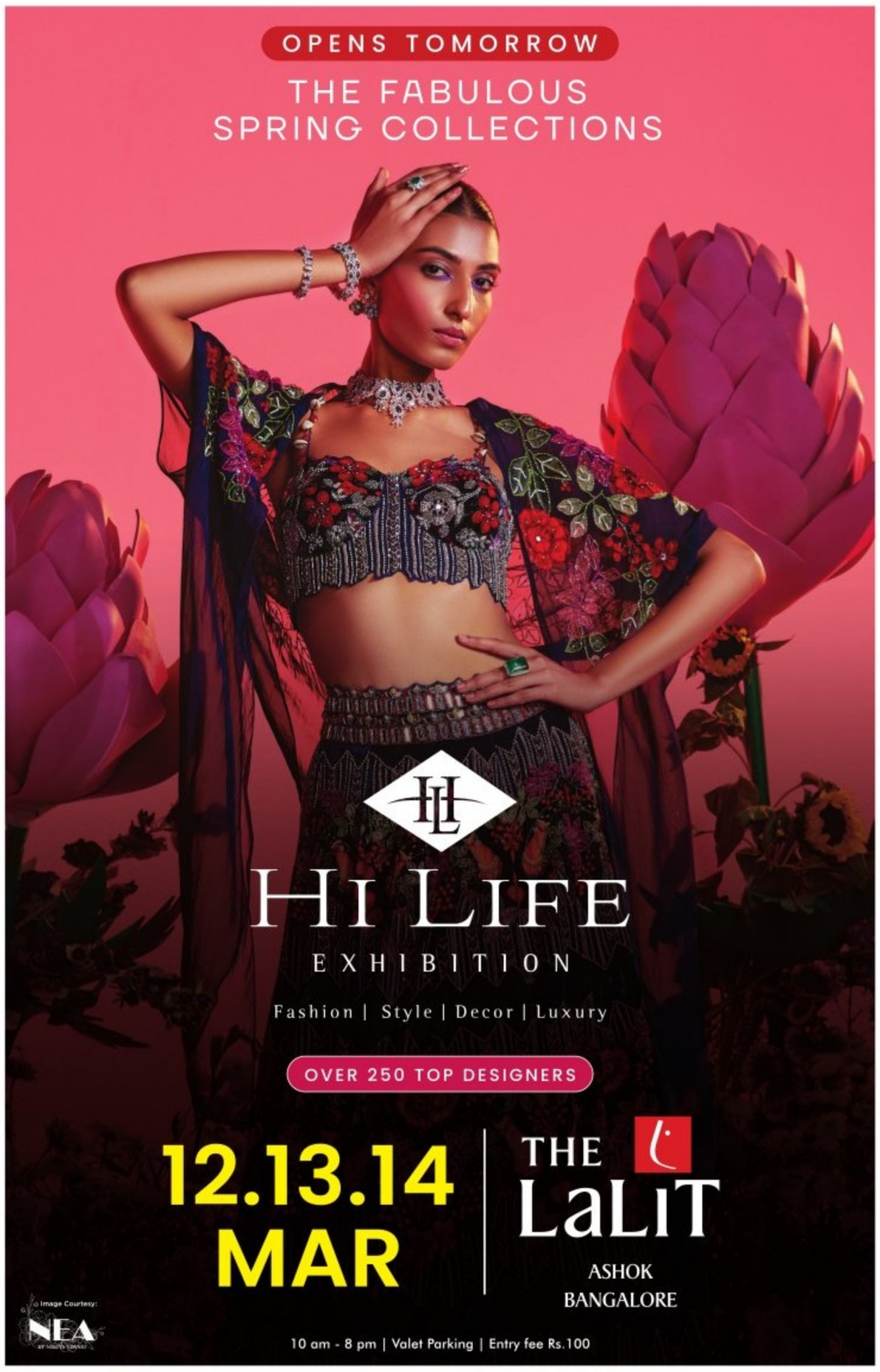
The correct answers and names of the first three respondents with right answers will be featured in *CE* on Monday. The first prize winner will win a voucher worth ₹1,000 from Nando's**

THE RIGHT ANSWERS

1) Cherimoya 2) Tangelo
3) Kiwano (Horned Melon)

FIRST 3 TO GET IT RIGHT

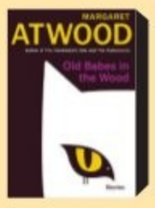
1) Raghav S 2) Shankar
3) Devyani



BOOK NOOK

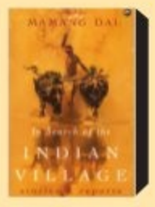
Circles of Freedom
By TCA Raghavan

Asaf Ali, Aruna Asif Ali, poet Sarojini Naidu, Syud Hossain and Syed Mahmud, a journalist and a politician. The book spotlights five characters, each weaving their unique thread into the rich tapestry of India's quest for freedom.



Old Babes in the Wood
By Margaret Atwood

A collection of 15 short stories look deeply into the heart of family relationships, marriage, loss and memory, and what it means to spend a life together. The author showcases creativity and humanity in these tales which by turns delight, illuminate, and quietly devastate.



In Search of the Indian Village: Stories and Reports
By Mamang Dai

Captures the essence of rural India through country's short fiction, commentary, scholarship and reportage. The anthology brings out the complex and vast tapestry of experiences that make the Indian village.

Rising 2.0: 20 More Women Who Changed India
By Kiran Manral

This collection of 20 stories brings the resilience and brilliance of iconic Indian women, who rose to be trailblazers and trendsetters against odds.

IN THE LONG RUN

Bengalureans promote a drug-free Karnataka at the Karnataka State Police Golden Jubilee Run on Sunday | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

QUICKFIX

JAR OF OATS

INGREDIENTS

- **Porridge oats:** 100 g
- **Yoghurt:** 4 tbsp
- **Fruits (as desired)**
- **A sprinke of cinnamon**
- **Milk:** 1 cup
- **Mixed berries and nuts:** 100 g
- **Honey:** 2 tbsp

METHOD

- Pour milk into half a jar of oats and sprinkle cinnamon on the top.
- Leave it in the fridge overnight.
- The next day, loosen it with a little milk (if needed).
- Add the berries to the mix.
- Top it with honey and yoghurt.
- Add the fruits as desired.

Contributed by **Midhun Daniels,** Kottayam

DR VIVEK ARORA
drvivekarora@hotmail.com

The expert is a senior veterinarian, Dr Gandhi's Pet Clinic, Delhi.

I have tried Timothy hay and alfalfa, but my rabbit doesn't eat hay. Suggest some ways to get him back to eating hay.

I am sorry to hear about the lack of interest of your bunny in hay. Yes, hay is very important for rabbits all throughout their life cycle. However, your query missed an important aspect regarding the age of your rabbit. Please avoid using alfalfa hay if it's an adult rabbit. Coming back to the problem of how to make him eat hay, there are several tricks which you can try and negotiate towards building a taste:

a) Use fresh hay.

b) Try mixing hay with pellets or different kinds of hay.

c) Put hay in stacks or arrange them in a manner as found naturally so that it generates interest in them.

Hay is the most important source of fibre for a rabbit. It helps in normal peristalsis of the intestines and also provides dental exercise. It's important that the hay is fresh, without any foreign object and is sweet smelling.

ASK AN XPERT

FITBIT

SUPTA BADDHA KONASANA GYAN MUDRA

(RECLINING BOUND ANGLE POSE GYAN MUDRA)

It is a lying down variant of Baddha Konasana (Cobbler's pose), which is a restorative yoga pose that can be done by everybody. Doing it early in the morning will keep you energised for the whole day or practice it later in the evening, on the bed, for a good night's sleep.

STEPS

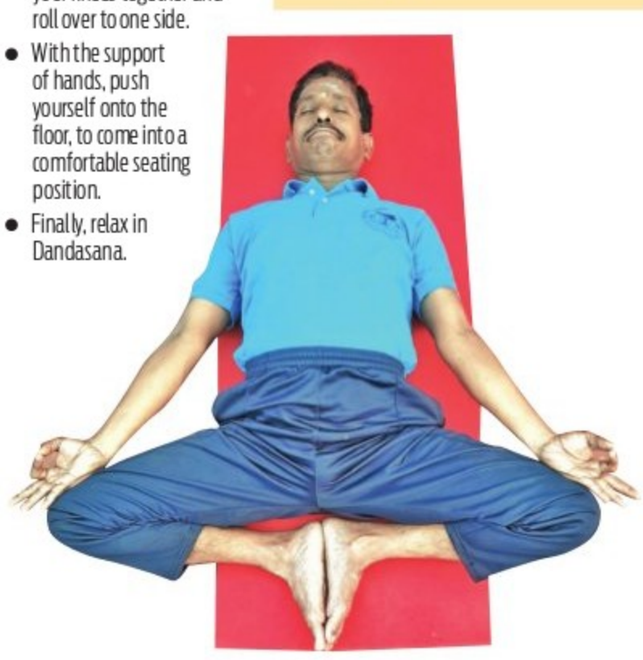
- Sit straight with legs extended in Dandasana (Staff Pose).
- Bend your knees and open it on the outer side and move your feet closer to your groins. Do this with the support of your hands.
- Then, join the soles of your feet to come in Baddha Konasana (Butterfly Pose).
- With the support of your elbows on the floor, exhale, and lean backward on the floor.
- Adjust your buttocks and the whole body to lengthen the spine.
- Draw your shoulders away from your ears, relax your shoulder blades and rest your back on the mat.
- Keep your arms adjacent to your knees, palms facing up in a Gyan Mudra.
- Close your eyes while observing your breath.
- Stay here for a minimum of 60 seconds, breathing naturally.
- To release the pose, draw your knees together and roll over to one side.
- With the support of hands, push yourself onto the floor, to come into a comfortable seating position.
- Finally, relax in Dandasana.

BENEFITS

- Opens the groin area and increases mobility in the hips.
- Calms your mind and relieves anxiety and stress.
- Lowers the blood pressure, decreases the heart rate, and relaxes your muscles.
- Gives relief from headache and insomnia.
- Beneficial for those with asthma and heart ailments.
- Stimulates the abdominal area and aids in digestion and functioning of kidney, prostate gland, and urinary bladder.
- Helps in activating ovaries.
- Stimulates Svadhisthana (Sacral) Chakra, associated with creativity and emotions.
- Benefits your pelvic region, inner thighs, and knees to get a necessary and good stretch.
- Stress on the nervous system is reduced with regular practice.
- Helps induce sleep.
- Enhances the flow of energy in the abdominal and reproductive region.

LIMITATIONS

- People with injuries on their groin, lower back, hip or knee avoid this pose.
- Pregnant women should practise only after raising their head and chest on a bolster or set of cushions.
- If you feel any ache or pain while practising this asana, stop doing it.



By N Elumalai, PhD Scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

WHATWHENWHYWHERE

Girls' Evening Out

Build lasting connections and memories with your girl gang as you sing your heart out, dance like no one's watching and enjoy your free coffee.

When: March 11, 4pm
Where: Casa Karaoke, JP Nagar
Details: bookmyshow.com

Art Therapy

Get ready to put your imagination on canvas with a workshop where you paint with alcohol ink. Take home a beautiful art piece at the end!

When: March 11, 5pm **Where:** Art Beat, HSR Layout
Details: bookmyshow.com

Histories of Learning

Trace the history of students, from ancient philosophers to modern university students, and explore various learning models with academician **Michael S Roth**.

When: March 11, 6.30pm
Where: Bangalore International Centre, Domlur
Details: bangaloreinternationalcentre.org

Comedy Night

De-stress from all the Monday blues as you laugh your heart out with two comics in town: Shunky Chugani and Ashwin Srinivas.

When: March 11, 8.30pm **Where:** Drunkling Comedy Club, Koramangala
Details: bookmyshow.com

Play With Pots

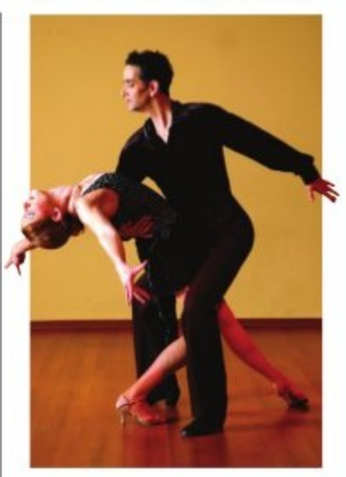
Join this pottery workshop where you get to learn everything from basic techniques to mastering wheel throwing. All your work will be glazed and fired for free!

When: March 11, 2pm
Where: Wheel and Potter Pottery Studio, Srinivasa Nagar
Details: bookmyshow.com

Poet's Day

An open stage for poets and storytellers to spread the magic of their words and also listen to some of their fellow mates in the town.

When: March 11, 7pm **Where:** Small World, Koramangala **Details:** bookmyshow.com



Salsa Social

An event to bring together all the Salsa dancers in town and give them an opportunity to bond and form a community free of any restrictions.

When: March 11, 8pm
Where: Qube Cafe, Jayanagar
Details: allevents.in

Books in a Box

Book lovers, assemble! Here's a book fair that allows you to get as many books as you can fit in a box with the same payment for each box.

When: March 11, 10am onwards
Where: Kemp Fort Mall, Murugeshpalya
Details: insider.in

Fashion Fiesta

Discover the hottest fashion trends in town and reinvent your wardrobe with Hi Life, a fashion exhibition, that takes you through various styles and designs from top designers.

When: March 12, 10am onwards
Where: The Lalit Ashok, Seshadripuram
Details: allevents.in

EXPRESS CONNECT

HAVE A RECIPE OR ART WORK TO SHARE, OR A QUESTION TO ASK?

@XpressBengaluru/@tniefeatures
bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com
@xpress_bengaluru

ARTCORNER

HILLS ARE ALIVE

Now living in a city, Neeraj Singh Khandka grew up in the mountains. He works on memories of time and space from his childhood which comes in collaboration with the experiences of his current urban space.

THE MULTI-HUED HISTORY OF WOMANHOOD

Jitha Karthikeyan gives a glimpse into the trajectory of the portrayal of women in Indian art

A woman is the full circle. Within her is the power to create, nurture, and transform."

Women are the pillars of any civilisation. The roles they have played have shaped the world and yet, for most of history, they have remained unacknowledged.

Shifting social norms have often altered and moulded these roles and art has served to be visual documentation of these changing statuses. From being merely ornamental motifs to finally being embodiments of gender identity, these meandering perceptions have been represented in art for centuries.

COMPANY PAINTING

When Mughal rule gave way to the rule of the British Empire, colonisation brought forth what was termed Company paintings. Painted by Indians who worked for patrons from the East India Company, they offered peeks into everyday life in British India. The women in these paintings of the 19th century were either shown as deities or going about their household chores. Many of these artworks also render them as dancers and courtesans.

'Bharat Mata' by Abanindranath Tagore

THE FEMININE ENERGY OF A CAPTIVE NATION

In the pre-Independence era, when calls for freedom from colonial rule were becoming louder throughout the nation, the country took on a feminine form, thanks to Bengali artist Abanindranath Tagore. In 1905, he depicted the nation as Bharat Mata or Mother India, a much-needed symbol of nationalism that greatly helped unite the rebelling country – as both strength and love are maternal virtues. The image became so popular and not only inspired the freedom struggle but also became a household image, which remains to this day.

Bhimbetka cave art

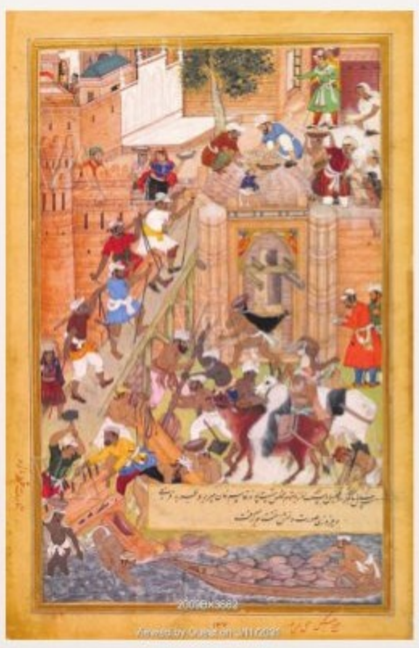
THE EARLIEST PORTRAYALS

The first-ever paintings on cave walls were handprints left behind nearly 30,000 years ago and research has shown them to be of women. So, it could be proudly stated that the earliest artists in the world were women. In India, the Bhimbetka cave paintings are the earliest, and the women here have been depicted as participants in a lot of activities including hunting, sometimes even digging rats out of holes! With civilisations transforming the nomadic nature of mankind, the images of women primarily became representations of fertility. Women in the Indus Valley civilisation played much more significant roles in society than in any other ancient civilisation. Their ability to produce offspring was of utmost importance and many sculptures discovered from this period show women nursing their children. Gender preferences seem to have been prevalent even then as the children in these maternal figurines were predominantly male.

A figurine of a woman from Indus Valley Civilisation

THE MUGHAL WOMEN

When the Mughals invaded India, Babur considered the presence of women as very essential for legitimising his fledgling empire. In the later periods under Jahangir and Shah Jahan's reigns, women, especially in royal families were considered equal to men and sometimes, were even made co-rulers. Mughal art, which was heavily influenced by Persian styles, has an almost-near absence of women compared to men. This may be due to the limitations imposed on the visibility of the women of the court due to the purdah system. However, the depiction of ordinary women in public were not bound by such customs and were painted as performing mundane chores. For instance, in the *Akbarnama*, a chronicle of the reign of Akbar, artists Tulsi and Miskin's illustrations of the construction of the Agra Fort also show women working with men. There are a multitude of paintings of women taking part in festivities too.



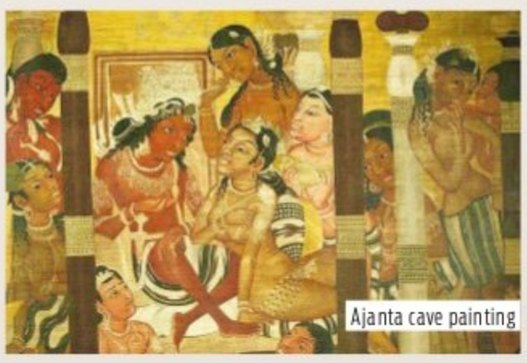
'The Construction of Agra Fort' by Miskin and Tulsi in Akbarnama

WOMEN IN A FREE COUNTRY

After Independence and with the rise of several brilliant women artists, artistic expressions took on a feminist consciousness, and a woman's voice was heard through her own tongue. In the mid-20th century, soon after Independence, there were still many taboos and restrictions that women faced in pursuing art. And yet, exceptions like **Amrita Sher-Gil** and others whose self-portraits challenged the male gaze and the way women were depicted in art over the centuries gradually brought on new perceptions. In a newly-Independent India, more women were progressively able to pursue an education in arts and through their powerful artworks, were able to reclaim their bodies from male interpretations prevalent in art since time immemorial. The days of women as decorative symbols or manifestations of child-bearing domesticity in art are almost disappearing with this reclamation and bolder portrayals of feminine energy have brought on an understanding of a woman's identity. Women's roles as icons ranged from being seductive and erotic to mythical and religious as they imparted social, political, and ethical values. As we progress into new eras, may these liberated depictions of women herald a fairer world for womankind!

STORIES FROM ANCIENT CAVES

The paintings in the Ajanta and Ellora caves are world-renowned, no doubt, but it is interesting to observe that the women in most of these paintings are merely beautiful accompaniments, added to the largely male-centric murals to create the perfect aesthetics. Their bodies were voluptuous and their expressions were personifications of grace. Paintings and sculptures where women were a part of the central narrative were very few, with the paintings of Lord Buddha's mother and groups of women rejoicing at the birth of Lord Mahavira being the exception.



Ajanta cave painting

'Naan oru penn, yen ennam aayiram' by Benitha Perciyal

From soups & soaps to stimulants & stress-busters

MINT stands out as a versatile herb valued for its aromatic leaves and a multitude of applications. Though many varieties of mint are grown in different parts of India, spearmint, peppermint, and Japanese mint are commonly cultivated.

With its creeping rhizome and erect stems reaching heights between 0.4m to 0.8m, the Japanese mint (Mentha arvensis) presents an unmistakable presence in any garden. Its stems, adorned with quadrangulate branching and short, dense hair, contribute to its distinctive appearance, while its oblong-ovate leaves, measuring 2.5cm to 5cm in length, further enhance its allure.

Notably, the Japanese mint displays auxiliary whorls of flowers, except at the apex, with blooming primarily occurring in May to June and again in September to November.

Originating in the Northern Hemisphere, mint thrives in tropical climates. In India, it is cultivated in north India. Thriving under sunny weather conditions with moderate rainfall, mint requires humus-rich soil.

In the culinary realm, mint adds a delightful flavour to many dishes. It also serves as a cornerstone in the production of natural menthol.

Medicinally, mint stands out for its efficacy against stomach disorders, rheumatism, headaches (in ointments), coughs (in drops), and inhalations. Both the oil and dried plants of mint contribute to its reputation as an indispensable herb.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICE

CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF NAME
I, (OLD NAME) **MOHAMMED SHAKEEL ZIAULLA,** Resident at No. 53, 2nd Floor, 3rd Cross, Rajanna Layout, RBI Extension Jayanagar 3rd Block, Bangalore-560011, have changed my name from **(OLD NAME) MOHAMMED SHAKEEL ZIAULLA** to **(NEW NAME) MOHAMMED ZIAULLA** vide affidavit dated 07-Mar-2024 sworn before notary T.V. Bhadravijaya, Bangalore.

AFFIDAVIT
I, **DINESH NAIK** S/o Late Parameshwar, No. 6/3, Keremane Kacharike, Salkod Post, Uttara Kannada, Karnataka-581334, today at Bengaluru I declare that my name has been changed from **DINESH** to **DINESH NAIK**, henceforth I shall be known and called as **DINESH NAIK** only, vide affidavit dated 07/03/2024, sworn before Advocate and Notary **P.N NAGESHA** at Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **LAKSHMI BHARATH**, D/o Late M.C. Chidananda & W/o Bharath K.A., aged 38 Years, R/at #91, Ganga Jamuna Road, 4th Cross, Akshayanagar, Begur, Bommanahalli, Bengaluru-560068, have changed my name from **"LAKSHMI JOIS M.C." to "LAKSHMI BHARATH"** for all purposes from today by an Affidavit sworn to before Notary, Vani G.K, Dated 07.03.2024 at Bangalore. Henceforth I shall be known by my new name of **LAKSHMI BHARATH** only.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Tanushree Chaturvedi** aged 33 years, residing at A 204, Himagiri Residency, Neeladri Road, Electronic City Phase 1, Bengaluru 560100, have changed my minor daughter's name from **Myrah Tripathi** to **Myrah Chaturvedi.,** vide affidavit dated 9/3/2024 sworn to before Shreeshail B. Gobbani advocate and notary Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, NAVEEN SHUKLA S/o. UMADATT aged about 51 years residing at No.101, 1 Main, Marenahalli, Bangalore-560040., have changed my son's name from **Mayank Shukla N to Mayank Shukla** vide affidavit dated: 09.03.2024 before Advocate and notary B.A. Lakshminarayana Rao, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, SUJITH, residing at # 4-25, 'Sundari Nivasa', Balkodi, Padukudoor, Yellare Post, Karkala Taluk, Udupi Dist-574108, have changed my name to **SUJITH SHETTY** vide affidavit dated: 09.03.2024 before Advocate and notary B.M. Chandrashekar, Bengaluru.

DECLARATION
I, JAGANNATH SUBUDHI, aged about 37 years, S/o. B. Lima Subudhi, residing at Door No.120, 2nd Floor, 1st Main, 2nd Cross, Behind DTDC Office, Madiwala, Bangalore-560068, I declare that the names **B Jaganath Subudhi, Jaganath Subudhi Bontu, Bontu Jaganath Subudhi, B Jaganath Subudhi,** All names belongs to me only, one and the same person, Henceforth and in future I declare the corrected name as **JAGANNATH SUBUDHI"** and I shall be known and called as **"JAGANNATH SUBUDHI"** for all purposes. vide affidavit dated: 09.03.2024 before Advocate and notary B.M. Chandrashekar, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, the undersigned OMKAR R PRASAD, Aged about 22 years, Residing at Flat No.205, 2nd Floor, Balaji Enclave, 2nd A Main Road, Sriram Nagar, Ittamadu, BSK 3rd Stage, Bangalore-560085, have changed my father name from RAMESHWAR G PRASAD to **RAMESHWAR GOMATI PRASAD** Vide affidavit dated 09-03-2024 sworn before Advocate & Notary DEEPA M., Bengaluru

AFFIDAVIT
I, **NAVEEN M.A** aged 48 years, S/o Anantharajappa, R/at No. 664/5, Lakshmi Ranganatha Krupa, 6th Cross, Municipal Layout, Siddaganga Extension, I state that due to Numerology and out of our own free will and wish, I intend to change his name from **YASHAS MUDIGERE NAVEEN**, to the name **YASHAS NAVEEN** both refers to my son only. Henceforth he shall be known and called by new name as **YASHAS NAVEEN**, all his transactions will be carried out in the name of **YASHAS NAVEEN** for further education and for all practical purposes and vide affidavit dated 07/03/2024, sworn before Advocate and Notary **PUTTARAMAIAH** at Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **(OLD NAME) SHAMSHEER V** residing at No.465, 13th Cross, Bhuvaneshwarinagar, Near Acharya College, Bengaluru -560032, have changed my name from **(OLD NAME) SHAMSHEER V** to **(NEW NAME) SHAMSHEER AHAMED** vide affidavit dated 08.03.2024 sworn before Notary Sivakumara M.N., Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **PARAMESHA .G**, S/o Govindaraju C.G, aged about 34 years, R/at No.364/1, Kannada Kasturi Road, Near Standard English School, T Dasarahalli, Bangalore -560057. I have changed my name from **"PARAMESH .G "** To **"PARAMESHA .G "** for astrologer advice. vide affidavit dated **07.03.2024**, sworn to before **K.V.Bachi Reddy** Advocate & Notary at Bangalore. I declare that my earlier name **"PARAMESH .G"** and now my present name **"PARAMESHA .G "** are one and the same Person

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **MANJULAMMA**, Aged about 66 years, (Date of Birth 30-06-1957), Residing at # 680, Vijayananda Nagar, Bangalore North, Nandini Layout, Bangalore, Karnataka - 560 096, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **MANJULAMMA SANJEEVAPPA** to **MANJULAMMA** vide affidavit dated 08.03.2024 sworn to before Anitha Bai, Advocate & Notary, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, KALPA SHIVARAMIAH AVVERAHALLY, aged: 50 Years, DOB: 12.12.1973, daughter of Dr.A.D. Shivaramaiah ,presently residing at Flat No. 401, Chartered Karthika, Wheeler Road Etn, Cooke Town, Bangalore 560005, I declare that the names **KALPA SHIVARAMIAH AVVERAHALLY (ALIAS) AVVERAHALLY SHIVARAMAIAH KALPA, (ALIAS) KALPA S DHANJANI (ALIAS) A.S. KALPA,** All names belongs to me only, one and the same person, Henceforth and in future I declare the corrected name as **"KALPA SHIVARAMIAH AVVERAHALLY"** and I shall be known and called as **"KALPA SHIVARAMIAH AVVERAHALLY"** for all purposes. vide affidavit dated 28-02-2024, Sworn before Advocate and Notary Prasad Shetty K.B., Bangalore.

DECLARATION
I, **SANDEEP PANAT SETHUMADHAVAN,** and also known as **SANDEEP P S,** aged about 38 years, S/o. Sethumadhavan Nalledath Palat, residing at Flat No.207, A-2 Building, Ghataprabha Block, National Games Village, Koramangala, Bangalore-560034, I declare that the names **SANDEEP P S, SANDEEP PANAT SETHUMADHAVAN, SANDEEP PANAT SETHUMADHAVAN, SANDEEP P S,** All names belongs to me only, one and the same person, vide affidavit dated: 09.03.2024 before Advocate and notary B.M. Chandrashekar, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, the undersigned OMKAR R PRASAD, Aged about 22 years, Residing at Flat No.205, 2nd Floor, Balaji Enclave, 2nd A Main Road, Sriram Nagar, Ittamadu, BSK 3rd Stage, Bangalore-560085, have changed my mother name from SANJU DEVI to **SANJU RAMESHVAR** Vide affidavit dated 09-03-2024 sworn before Advocate & Notary DEEPA M., Bengaluru

CHANGE OF NAME
I, (OLD NAME) **SATHISHA B C** Residing at No. S/o Chikkmutha Setty, No. 50/27, 11th Main, 4th Block, Near Ring Road, Nandini Layout, Bangalore - 560096. Have changed My name from **(OLD NAME) SATHISHA B C** to **(NEW NAME) SATHISH BESAGARAHALLI CHIKKAMUTTA SHETTY** vide Affidavit dated 09.03.2024 sworn before Notary K.C. SHASHIKALA Bangalore

'A PHOTO CAPTURES MORE THAN A MOMENT, IT IS A LIFETIME OF MEMORIES'

...says Prakash Raj, who is presenting the upcoming film, Photo, directed by Utsav Gonwar, which sees its release this week

Prakash Raj

A SHARADHAA

PHOTO, a film directed by debutant Utsav Gonwar, provides a poignant portrayal of the migrant exodus during the COVID-19 lockdown. Set to release on March 15 following its success on the festival circuit, the film has got backing from noted actor and filmmaker Prakash Raj, who is poised to present it to audiences. In his conversation with *CE*, Prakash Raj elucidates his reasons for championing this film and explores the intricacies of its thematic elements.

"When considering to present a film like *Photo,* one must recognise its capacity to analyse a significant moment in time," Prakash Raj muses. "A photo captures not only a moment but a repository of memories that endure a lifetime. However, the true essence of a photo lies in the timing and context of its capture. While a candid photo may hold little intrinsic value, a photo imbued with memory, born out of crisis, an incident, or a decision, holds more significance."

He continues, "Even children's photos, seemingly uniform, hold distinct resonance when captured during a birthday celebration or a memorable trip. It's the context and timing that elevate a photo from mere imagery to a cherished memento. Each photo carries its own narrative, shaped by the circumstances in which it was taken."

The central plot of *Photo* revolves around the Vidhana Soudha (legislative house of Karnataka). Prakash Raj offers a layered perspective about this heritage building, as he says, "To me, Vidhana Soudha stands not merely as a heritage site, but as a symbol of governance, where decisions shaping the history and future of Karnataka are deliberated and enacted. The structure serves as both a historical monument and the epicentre of governance, directly impacting the lives of citizens. This dual interpretation adds richness and depth to the narrative of *Photo*, wherein every individual's encounter with Vidhana Soudha carries not only personal but also societal implications."

Photo effectively captures the struggles of lockdown life during the pandemic. But is the pandemic still relevant? "Thanks to medicine and science, the disease itself might not be as big of a concern now, but the impact it had on us is still significant. Governments worldwide weren't fully prepared for the sudden lockdowns, and it showed our humanity - how we weren't ready to understand each other's pain. Fear became widespread, and we closed ourselves off from each other."

Director Prakash Raj explains that *Photo* isn't about criticising any specific government or ideology. It's about our shared humanity and how the pandemic affected all of us, regardless of religion or politics. "The film delves into various societal issues beyond politics, caste, and social distancing, showing how we're all connected through this experience. The film urges us to reflect on our actions and the importance of compassion during tough times," he says.

In addition to covering the pandemic, *Photo* also highlights the beautiful relationship between a son and his father and mother. According to Prakash Raj, the film, very organically, portrays a humane story during the pandemic. If Prakash Raj was the director of *Photo*, how would you approach the film differently? "It would have been a different film, more jazzy. This is Utsav's film, and I am just a part of it. I would just consider it as a father-son story and might have dramatised it. I would have played the father's role, but definitely, I wouldn't have made such a heart-touching film. Coming from Utsav, *Photo* has become more honest," he says.

His impression of Utsav Gonwar's directorial debut is quite positive, and so is the case with a few fresh talents. "I admire the way fresh directors like him are emerging from each industry, bringing new perspectives and content to the table. It's inspiring to see the younger generation of filmmakers tackling stories that go beyond the glamour of the industry." Films like *Photo* are examples of this shift where the focus lies on the story rather than star power. "As an actor, I appreciate being able to step back and simply enjoy a film as an audience member. It's a reminder that being a star doesn't necessitate being the lead in every film; sometimes, the story is better narrated by the performance of other actors. This realisation has led me to unlearn certain notions and embrace the idea that my involvement should be based on where I'm truly needed."

"It's been a hiatus since Prakash Raj, the actor and filmmaker, directed films. "Directing isn't just my profession; it's my passion. If the opportunity arises, I'll seize it. Currently, I'm immersed in various pursuits like farming, theatre, and family. I'm focusing on nurturing emerging talent through Nirdiganta, a theatre incubation centre. This shift marks a return to my roots, albeit from a different angle. As an organiser and facilitator, I aim to empower younger generations by providing platforms for their stories to flourish," he signs off.

A still from the film

'Audiences have gravitated towards content-driven cinema'

Rajguru B

....says director Rajguru, who talks about his debut venture, *Kerebete*, and how it is a culmination of a long struggle

CE FEATURES

RAJGURU B, known for his contributions as an assistant director to filmmaker Pavan Wadeyar in notable films like *Googly* and *Natasaarvabhouma*, is stepping into the director's shoes with his debut, *Kerebete*. As the film gears up for release on March 15, the debutant director shares his journey and excitement about finally making his mark in the industry.

"For me, marking my directorial debut with *Kerebete* is a culmination of a long struggle," expresses Rajguru, adding, "Although I entered the industry in 2008, it took me all these years to realise my dream of directing a film. There were moments of regret along the way, but now, I feel fulfilled seeing it come to fruition."

Reflecting on his decision to pursue a content-based storyline, Rajguru explains, "If I had opted for a commercial film, I might have gained recognition, but I wouldn't have been content. As someone from the Malnad region, I wanted to ensure *Kerebete* is a film that is deeply rooted in my native and reflects my upbringing. The changing perspectives of the audience post-pandemic and the industry's openness to new subjects have provided the perfect opportunity for my debut."

Today's audiences have gravitated towards content-driven cinema, in search of stories that are closer to reality," observes Rajguru. "Our Kannada films, known for their rich storytelling tradition, had strayed from their roots under outside influences. However, we now see a resurgence of stories that celebrate our heritage," he says. As for *Kerebete*, the film revolves around age-old fishing traditions in the Malnad regions, blending elements of commercial entertainment with a narrative that justifies its title.

Rajguru expresses gratitude for collaborating with actor Gowri Shankar, also from the Malnad region, who embraced the story and came on board as both actor and producer. The film, presented by Dinakar Thoogudeepa and produced by Jaishankar Patel, under the Janamana Cinemas banner, has Bindu Shivaram making her debut, while Gopalkrishna Deshpande, Harini, and Sampath Kumar play pivotal roles.

The technical team of *Kerebete* includes music composer Gagan Baderiya, DOP Keerthan Poojary, and editor Jnanesh B Matad.

A still from the film

Dhanya Ramkumar

The concept of one hero or heroine does not exist in mystery thrillers: Dhanya Ramkumar

CE FEATURES

Earlier in the day, actors would feature in multiple films annually. Today, the scene has shifted to actors only doing a handful per year. Dhanya Ramkumar, who made her debut with *Ninna Sanihake (2021)*, reflects on this change, as she is thrilled about her sophomore project, *Hide & Seek*. Directed by Punith Nagaraj, the film, gearing up to hit theatres this week, sees her sharing screen space with Anup Revanna.

"I believe in one thing, and I was told by somebody very important, whose name, I don't want to mention. He had said that an actor's job is done the day we say 'Packup'. If we delve more into it, like the release and how it does, then it might affect the person in the process. It is always best to move on to the next. If it works, fine. If it doesn't, do your best in your next. Don't dwell on either success or failure; either way, it gets to your head, and it might affect your process. I believe in doing good work and continuing to try until I find something that the audience appreciates," shares Dhanya.

For Dhanya, who began with a love story, *Hide & Seek* marks her foray into the mystery thriller genre. "Mystery and crime thrillers have been my favorite genre. When I heard the narration by Punith Nagaraj, the story was extremely gripping. I wouldn't say I was hasty when I picked up the project. I was one hundred percent sure to be a part of the film. I haven't watched the film, so I am yet to know the final outcome. I only hope the film has been shaped and executed the way it was narrated to me by the director," she says.

In the film, Dhanya portrays Haasini, a prodigal daughter from a wealthy family who suddenly finds herself kidnapped. "My character's graph changes through the course of the film, and I had more to perform when tasked with how I should react to the situation," she explains.

Understanding that in mystery thrillers, the story takes precedence, Dhanya embraces her role in Hide & Seek. "The concept of one hero or heroine does not exist in mystery thrillers. *Hide & Seek* portrays Stockholm syndrome, in which I fall for the person who kidnaps me. Ultimately, the story is the star of the show, and every character plays a part in it. I was purely looking at *Hide & Seek* as a passion project, for the love of the genre, and I am glad that I got to do this subject early in my career."

Dhanya is also looking forward to *Kaalapatthar, The Judgement,* and *Powder*, which are in various stages of production. "There are different genres for me to experiment with," she says.

Additionally, Dhanya expresses excitement about Puneeth Rajkumar's *Jackie* re-release, which coincides with the release of *Hide & Seek* this week. "My priority will be *Jackie*, and I made it very clear to the team. I am looking forward to watching and re-experiencing one of the best films of Puneeth Rajkumar. I'm sure it will be a roller coaster of emotions. We are going to be jumping, dancing, and crying, and waiting for March 15," she concludes.

A riveting sci-fi thriller about time and fate

A SHARADHAA

In the blink of an eye, the world can change, destiny can be rewritten, and lives can be forever altered. This notion forms the pulsating heartbeat of *Blink,* where the very act of blinking becomes a metaphor for the unpredictable twists of fate. Director Srinidhi Bengaluru, who comes from a theatre background, is inspired by the Greek play Oedipus Rex, translated into Kannada by P Lankesh as Dore Oedipus, along with a couple of time travel stories. *Blink* is a riveting sci-fi thriller that seamlessly intertwines the complexities of time travel, taking audiences on a journey through the corridors of time, between 1996, 2001, 2021, 2035, and so on, where every blink holds the potential to alter destiny.

Set against the backdrop of modern-day Bengaluru, Blink introduces us to Apoorva (Deekshith Shetty), a 24-year-old theatre artist, who works backstage and grapples with the weight of his own secrets and aspirations. Concealing his academic failures from his mother back in the village, Apoorva navigates the complexities of his dual life, finding solace and support in his love interest, Swapna (Mandara Battalahalli). However, Apoorva's life takes a startling turn when he discovers an extraordinary ability hidden within him – the power to control blinking.

As Apoorva delves deeper into the mystery surrounding his newfound skill, he is confronted by a mysterious old man who unveils shocking revelations about his father's fate. However, before Apoorva can fully grasp the implications of this revelation, the old man disappears, leaving behind a trail of unanswered questions. Soon, Apoorva finds himself pursued not only by his own doppelganger but also by the enigmatic old man, each harbouring their own agenda.

As the lines between reality and illusion blur, Apoorva embarks on a quest for truth, unraveling the tangled web of his own identity. With every twist and turn, *Blink* challenges the very fabric of time itself, inviting audiences to ponder the nature of fate and free will. Through its relentless pace and mind-bending plot twists, the film keeps viewers on the edge of their seats.

RATING 3.5/5

Srinidhi Bengaluru's journey as a filmmaker is a testament to his passion for breaking the rules and pushing the boundaries of cinema. The director's vision of challenging conventional norms and exploring new horizons in filmmaking, is evident in his debut, *Blink*. By drawing inspiration from diverse sources, and contemporary theater, Srinidhi demonstrates his versatility as a director.

On the other hand, actor Deekshith Shetty commands a significant portion of his screen time amidst the ensemble cast. He has delved deeper into the character's complexity. Perhaps his love for theatre helped him bring in the versatility. Whether he's confronting the mysteries of time travel or attempting to decipher his own existence, the actor brings a raw authenticity to his role that keeps viewers engaged from start to finish.

In addition to Deekshith Shetty, *Blink* boasts an interesting cast, which includes Gopalkrishna Deshpande and Chaithra J Achar, whose contributions to the narrative are crucial. While their performances add depth and dimension to the story, audiences are left yearning for more of their screen presence.

What sets *Blink* apart from other sci-fi thrillers is its seamless integration of different technical aspects, like the traditional folk music by Prasanna Kumar MS, the vibrant visuals by Avinasha Shastri, and the editing by Sanjeev Jagirdar. As Apoorva navigates through a myriad of emotions, each accompanied by its own distinct melody, the soundtrack serves as a reminder of the universal themes that bind us all – love, loss, and redemption.

Blink transcends its genre as more than just a sci-fi thriller; it is a film that challenges perceptions and leaves audiences eagerly anticipating what's next. With its bold narrative choices, the film heralds the arrival of a passionate filmmaker in Srinidhi Bengaluru.

BLINK

Director: Srinidhi Bengaluru

Cast: Deekshith Shetty, Mandara Battalahalli, Chaithra Achar, Gopalkirhsna Deshpande, and Suresh Angalli